

photo

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

by Jim Gordon, President of ILM

A few weeks ago I found myself going through a "down" period in my life. I was feeling very alone, and unsupported, and could not understand how I had gotten to this place. So I sat down, closed my eyes in meditation, and began to look within and see where these feelings and thoughts were coming from. As I began to look inside I heard a part of myself saying that I wanted God to do my life for me. I did not want to deal with the responsibilities of life and the pressures of making decisions. I wanted God to come in and tell me what to do and then to do it for me; then and only then was I going to feel loved and supported again. I opened my eyes and wrote down in my journal what I had seen and felt.

Then I closed my eyes again to see if something further might come forward to help me understand, and I went into an inner experience. I found myself as a child standing and walking. Really, I was just learning to walk. I was walking along somewhat unsure, but also very confident because I was holding onto my father's index fingers. He was standing behind me and my arms were reaching up to hold onto him for support. Knowing that he was there and feeling his support helped me take the next, and then the next, step. I never had to look up or behind me to see if he was there supporting me because I knew the support was there by the feel of his fingers in mine. Then one day, I looked behind me as I was taking a step and saw my father standing a few steps behind me. I quickly looked up to see that I was not holding onto his fingers, but rather two clothes pins. I was somehow holding myself up. Well, I immediately stopped - and sat down rather hard. My father picked me up and said how well I was doing. He knew I fell because I did not feel the support I was expecting from him. His words and tone of voice as well as him picking me up and holding me gave me the feeling of support once again.

I opened my eyes from my meditation and began to feel a renewed sense of support that I did

not have a few minutes before. I began to feel that I could take the next step in my life, and the next, because that loving support was present again. Strange, I thought, because my father was not there this time to lift me up in his arms and reassure me with his words and that certain tone of voice. I again realized that this "new" sense of support I was feeling was my true Father's loving support, the support of God ever standing with me and supporting me to take the next step.

I closed my eyes to see what might come forward to help me understand this new sense of support. Then I realized that my father's loving support is always present even if he is not there in the physical. I knew that my father is ever standing right behind me supporting me now as he did then. And as I continued to look inside I began to realize that there was another level of support present. I realized that this "new" sense of support I was feeling was my true Father's loving support, the support of God ever standing with me and supporting me to take the next step. That is when I realized why I had felt so alone, unsupported and unwanting to go on: I had stopped taking the next step, and the next. I had stopped moving and in stopping I fell or sat down rather hard, just as I did when I was a child.

I realized that when I begin to doubt my Father's support and stop to look behind me to see if He is really there, I stop taking the next step. I sit down in my doubt, my fear and my feeling of being alone. The key then is to get up and go on - to take the next step. It is in action that we find what we are looking for whether it be the answer to a question or finding the sense that we are cared for and supported. God supports action. In fact, God *is* action. God is the next step, and the next, and the next. ■

THE ANGEL IN THE STONE

photo

by Steven McAfee, ILM Midwest Coordinator

According to legend, one day the great artist and sculptor Michelangelo was pushing a huge block of stone up the street toward his studio. A neighbor, watching his struggles with the massive stone, approached Michelangelo just as he had managed to get the stone to his place. "Why so much trouble over an old block of stone," the neighbor asked. "There's an angel inside who wants to get out," Michelangelo replied.

I believe that story has a deep insight into the nature of our life on earth. Inside all of us is something profound, beautiful, and awe-inspiring, and it wants so much to come forth. And yet, that inner radiant being, that "angel," is often not readily visible. Sometimes it is covered up by the masks of pretense we wear, hidden behind the psychological walls we create around ourselves to protect us from what we fear the world may do to us. Sometimes those walls become so thick and formidable that they are like a huge block of stone. Then we find that, not only have we walled out that which we fear in the world, we have walled ourselves inside and have become trapped in the stone, unable to reach out to that which we love.

Maybe there has been a time in your life, as there has been in mine, when you felt walled in, or even felt as worthless as an "old block of stone." Then a "Michelangelo" came along and saw inside of you an "angel who wants to get out." For me, it happened years ago, at a point in my life when I was very discouraged by the challenges I was facing at home and in my work. Even though I possessed a powerful sense of "calling" to have a spiritual ministry, I could not see any way to possibly fulfill it, due to the burden of these obligations. I felt like a failure, and I was so frustrated and disappointed in myself that I was ready to give up. Then, after a seminar one day, a friend of mine came up and hugged me and said, "Whatever you decide to do, I just want you to know that I love you, Steven, and I believe in you." I cannot fully convey what that did for me, but it was a real turning point in my life, which I have always remembered with deep gratitude.

Perhaps your Michelangelo is also a friend, or he could be a minister, a parent, a sibling, or even a

stranger. But when he looks at you, he doesn't see what others see. He sees the magnificent being inside of you. And in that moment, you begin to believe in that "angel" within you, and a piece of stone falls away.

How do you suppose the angel in the story felt once Michelangelo had removed all that was holding it back? How would you feel if you could be **Today, you could look into someone's eyes, someone you know or even someone you don't, and see there a living child of God within.** freed from the weight of the stone burden you carry?

There really is such an "angel" inside everyone. I believe we need more artists in our lives who see what is hidden within the stone and take the effort to help release it.

This holiday season, as we reflect upon the love of God and all the gifts he has given to the world, we could decide to give the gift that Michelangelo gave the angel in the stone. Today could be the day you become someone's "Michelangelo." Today, you could look into someone's eyes, someone you know or even someone you don't, and see there a living child of God within. And you could acknowledge them for who they really are, the living Image and Likeness of God. Who knows how many "angels" are out there, just waiting for an artist who can see?



Season's Greetings

THE INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES

CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, for program details and reservations in the Austin area, contact Laura at (512) 894-0992.

For program details and reservations in the Midwest area, contact Steven at (219) 485-2167.

WEEKLY CLASSES: Classes include spiritual teachings & techniques, guided meditation, and group sharing.

AUSTIN AREA

LOCAL CLASSES WITH JIM GORDON: Tuesday evening classes are 7:00-9:00 PM in Austin. At the ILM Center, Suite 100, 3724 Jefferson, Austin, TX.

December 14th: A *CIRCLE OF MAIDENS* workshop with Laura Kesten-Beaver.

January 17th-19th: *PEACEMAKER* workshop with Laura Kesten-Beaver. This is an experiential workshop based on Jean Houston's book of the same name, built around the story of the great Iroquois Peacemaker.

February 22nd: A *CIRCLE OF WOMEN: BOSOM BUDDIES*, a workshop with Laura Kesten-Beaver.

March 22nd: A *CIRCLE OF MAIDENS WORKSHOP* with Laura Kesten-Beaver.

MIDWEST AREA

TUESDAY EVENING CLASSES WITH STEVEN McAFEE: 7:30-9:00 PM, Unity Church, 3232 Crescent Ave., Ft. Wayne, IN.

December 7th: *FAMILY CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS*, with Steven McAfee. This is a workshop for sharing, honoring, and creating sacred family rituals for the holiday season. At the Hilton Hotel, Samuel Foster Room, Ft. Wayne, IN.

December 22nd: *CAROLING PARTY*, with Steven McAfee, for adults and children, 6:30-8:30 PM in Ft. Wayne, IN. Call Steven for more information.

December 28th: *CIRCLE OF WOMEN: THE ARTFUL YOU* workshop with Laura Kesten-Beaver, in Ft. Wayne, IN. This is a women's workshop designed to tap into our creativity using our bodies, minds, and hearts. Call Beth Ickes at (219) 747-6573 for reservations.

January 10th-12th: *CONTEMPLATIVE RETREAT*, with Steven McAfee. This retreat offers a quiet time for reflection, study, prayer, meditation, silence and support. At the Becker Lodge, Camp Mack, Milford, IN.

February 9th: *CONTEMPLATIVE CHRISTIANITY WORKSHOP* with Steven McAfee.

March 7-9th: *CONTEMPLATIVE CHRISTIANITY WORKSHOP* with Steven McAfee.

March 15th: A *CIRCLE OF WOMEN: WILD HEARTS EMERGING WORKSHOP* with Laura Kesten-Beaver in Kalamazoo.

Date To Be Announced: *FAMILIES WORKSHOP* with Laura Kesten-Beaver and Steven McAfee. This is ILM's first family program, focused on playfully sharing traditions and ideas for strengthening the family. Friday night is for parents only; Saturday is for families with children ages 5 and up.

There are other activities, such as Sunday services, potlucks and special programs, that are presently being scheduled for the Midwest region.

Please call Steven for current information.

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES MATERIALS LIST

CASSETTES OF JIM GORDON (\$8.95 each)

*Two titles together indicate
different lectures on each side.*

- Healing and Color Therapy (1980)
- From Here to Eternity *and*
Responsibility (1984)
- Lord, Make Me Worthy *and*
The Master in Your Heart (1985)
- Inner Revelation *and*
A Flower from Heaven (1986)
- Understanding Christ Consciousness (1987)
- The Path of Neutrality (1990)
- Songs of Praise to God *and* A New
Understanding of Relationships (1990)
- Our Right Relationship with God (1991)
- The Levels to Soul and Beyond (1991)
- Communication through Dreams (1991)
- Meditative Techniques (1991)
- Moving into Soul Consciousness *and*
Communion Ceremony (1991)
- You as a Communicator, You as a
Creator *and* A Meditation (1992)
- Keys to Inner Communication (1992)
- Awakening to Your Inner Light *and*
Calling in the Light (1994)
- Aura Cleansing Workshop (1994)
- Sending the Light (1994)



ILM BOOKS

BY JAMES R. GORDON (\$6 each)

- LOVE AND LOVING*
- THE KNOWING OF GOD*
- THE STAFF OF THE SHEPHERD*

ILM NEWSLETTERS

(individual issues free of charge)

- Volume 1** (1990): January, June, October
- Volume 2** (1991): June, October
- Volume 3** (1992): January, June, November
- Volume 4** (1993): January, May, September
- Volume 5** (1994): Jan., April, August, Nov.
- Volume 6** (1995): January, April, July

ORDER FORM

(a replacement copy will be enclosed with your order)

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Amount enclosed _____

ORDERING INFORMATION: Please add \$3
postage and handling per order (not per
item). Checks may be made payable to
"Inner Light Ministries" and sent to:

**PLEASE MARK YOUR SELECTIONS
AND RETURN TO:**

Inner Light Ministries
P.O. Box 164332
Austin, Texas 78716-4332

LIKE A BUTTERFLY

photo

by Laura Kesten-Beaver, ILM Minister

One morning in late September, I looked out my front window and was amazed to see waves of literally hundreds of thousands of butterflies, as if they all broke away from their cocoons at once. All day long, butterflies and more butterflies continued to take flight and fly away with the warm west wind. It was a spectacular sight.

As I watched them throughout the day, I began to reflect back in time to when I first learned that butterflies were once caterpillars. I was probably around five years old. For long periods of time, I used to watch caterpillars crawl over the branches of a tree, snacking on the leaves. I remember trying to find just one leaf that they hadn't taken a bite out of but never could.

My mother told me that these caterpillars would, one day, turn into butterflies. She explained that the caterpillar forms a cocoon, or chrysalis, around itself wherein the worm-like body then changes shape and form inside. And that in time, the newly formed butterfly would let itself out of the chrysalis and fly away. It was truly fascinating to me that a creature of one form, a crawling caterpillar, could just transform itself into another form, a butterfly with wings which enables it to fly freely in the sky. The transformational life of the butterfly struck a chord inside my young being that I could not explain, but which felt somehow timeless and wonderful.

Later in my life, I remember studying butterflies in school. I learned that the natural transformational process which a butterfly must undergo involves four stages of development: egg, caterpillar, pupa or chrysalis, and finally, butterfly. The completion of these four stages is called metamorphosis, a Greek word which means to transform.

And so on that recent September day, as I watched these beautiful creatures fill the sky with their gracefulness, that chord that had struck inside of me as a child was again resounding. This time, however, it transformed and took flight inside me as a wonderful realization: the stages of a butterfly's development are analogous to the stages of *our spiritual development*.

In the first stage in the life of a butterfly, the butterfly egg is laid in an appropriate place near its

vital food sources. For human beings, the egg could be said to represent the soul and the food sources the experiences, or lessons to be learned in life. An appropriate place for each soul entering the physical body is determined by the types of "food," or experiences, each of us must encounter.

In the second stage, the caterpillar develops within the egg. Soon the newly hatched caterpillar will spend its entire time eating, periodically molting old skin. Similarly, human beings develop and grow, housing the soul. We spend our time having experiences, learning lessons, and periodically, going through physical and emotional transformations or, if you will, "eating and molting old 'karmic' skin."

Then, in the third stage, the caterpillar forms a chrysalis, a protective casing or cocoon, around itself, becoming an almost immobile object. It is now called a pupa, or chrysalis. For human beings, this is a time in our soul development when we begin our inner spiritual work through meditation. When we sit in meditation we are, in a sense, forming a chrysalis around ourselves, our bodies becoming very still, or almost immobile, as we commune with God. In this stage, like chrysalises awaiting metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly, we sit in meditation awaiting transformation from our physical-bodied selves to our spiritually awakened selves.

Then, in the fourth and final stage we become like butterflies as we travel through the inner regions of Spirit. Some species of caterpillars transform into butterflies in just a few days, while in other species, the process may take as long as several months. Likewise, during the time when we are sitting in meditation, wrapped in our protective chrysalis, it may take a few days, or several months, or perhaps even years, before we actually transform into a "butterfly" where the soul takes flight and journeys to the inner regions.

Now, when I sit in meditation, I place a shawl around my body and another one around my head and I feel as if I am totally wrapped inside a chrysalis. As I begin to commune with God, I feel safe, warm and protected in the darkness. And, as with butterflies, I know that the metamorphosis into spiritual freedom *will* take place: it is the law of Nature and of God. ■

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.

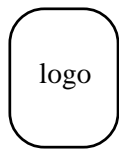
Among its fundamental tenets is that we really are "temples of the Holy Spirit." As we seek and express this presence within, we find the peace, love, power, and wisdom we all so earnestly desire. The many services of ILM are geared towards this path of individual unfoldment – such as meditation, study, 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

...prayer does not have to involve talking at all. We can go into our inner, private place of stillness and simply be with God, sharing our loving with Him and allowing ourselves to be uplifted in His Spirit. It is said that the deepest friendships can simply and joyously be shared in silence; that no words need to be expressed for true friends to share comfortably together. Such fulfilling moments of sharing in silence can certainly be part of our "friendship" with God as well...

– from **THE KNOWING OF GOD**
by Jim Gordon



INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES

Editorial and Publishing Office

P.O. Box 164332
Austin, Texas 78716-4332
Phone: (512) 894-0992

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Los Angeles, CA
PERMIT #41

Forwarding and Return Postage Guaranteed
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

