



by Jim Gordon,
President of ILM

MY OLD FRIEND, DOUBT

Doubt. What a word; what a feeling. Have you ever been in doubt? Have you ever doubted yourself, your ideas, your sense of what to do now? Well, I have. Doubt is something that has followed me, been with me, throughout my life for as long as I can remember. Luckily I have learned many things from doubt and through this learning have actually learned to look at doubt as a friend rather than an enemy.

It has not always been that way. There have been times in the past and even today where doubt gets in my way of doing my life. Then doubt looks like a great enemy that can stop me in my tracks and keep me from taking the next step. Doubt for me comes in many colors, shapes, sizes and voices. But always it comes in as not believing in myself, not believing in my "knowing." I have found that the way it begins to come forward is when I begin to look outside myself for confirmation, for that voice of approval from another, for someone else to take responsibility for me and my actions. The moment I begin to look out there in the world, the moment I give my power away to something or someone outside myself, at that very moment I find doubt standing in front of me. This looking outside myself I have found to be a red flag, a warning sign that I have given permission for doubt to now come forward and play a role in this moment in my life. If I am not paying attention to what is happening to me and in me right at that moment I might miss this red flag, so I am ever focusing into right now. What is going on now, what am I saying to myself inside, and where am I looking for my strength and my identity. If I see doubt, the not trusting in myself, standing before me, I know that somewhere recently I have given my power away by looking outside myself for my truth. I know that I have stopped listening to *me* and have started to listen to others.

I have also found that there are people in the world ever ready to be the "do-gooder", the

helping hand, the guiding light in my life – who will gladly tell me what I am doing wrong and what I need to do right in my life. And guess what, if I am not ever watchful, I can easily move into being such a "do-gooder" as well.

Actually, being a "do-gooder" for others is one way in which I give **my** power away to that which is outside of myself. If I am not sure of what to do for myself and I am not wanting to take responsibility for my actions, I will focus on that out there, on them out there, and "do it" for them. That seems a lot easier, and then I have an excuse for my life not working the way I would like it to. I am just too busy taking care of others, I don't have time for myself. "Poor little me."

Luckily, when I find myself in doubt, in not trusting myself, in not believing and listening to "me," but looking out there for answers, I then remember to just **stop** – stop whatever it is I am doing in the moment. I then look to see what it is I am doubting. I begin to reclaim my consciousness, my attention, my self awareness, and begin to look at the choices that are available for me in the situations and the decisions that are present in the moment to be made. By bringing back my focus to me and the choices that are present for me, I can begin to move into solutions and opportunities. This I have found to be a way for me to move doubt into fulfillment.

Then action is the next key for me. If I sit down inside myself and begin to live in doubt I go nowhere. If I don't stay in action, I go into *reaction* and doubt comes forward to stop me in my tracks. If I continue to move, be in action, I find that I can continue to make choices and do course corrections to fulfill what I am focusing on doing.

So now I see doubt as a friend – it always lets me know if I am in action or reaction. With reaction, I am moving into stagnation, into giving my power and belief in myself away, and I move into confusion and despair. With action I know that my life is ever moving forward and I am fulfilling myself in that moment. Doubt use to be my enemy, that which I judged and beat myself up with. Now doubt is a true friend and wayshower on my path back into the loving heart of God. ★



INNOCENCE: THE FACE OF GOD

by Steven McAfee,
ILM Midwest Coordinator

I remember looking into the calm, bright blue eyes of my firstborn son, Shawn, as he came out into the world and into my arms. I was in awe of the miracle of birth I had just witnessed, but I was even more amazed at the living soul I could see so clearly shining through his eyes. There was a person there, a living, breathing soul, a child of God, awake, alert, just born and already a conscious being. And looking into those eyes, I remembered innocence.

That was nearly fifteen years ago now. Since then I have looked into the newborn eyes of his younger brother, Justin, and of my two step-grandchildren. Each of them, every one, was a picture of innocence. And, as I suspect happens with all babies throughout time, each adult who looked at them softened, spoke more gently, and became themselves more radiant and childlike, as if they were somehow transformed simply by coming into the presence of innocence. Lately I have been asking the Lord to teach me more about innocence. Here is some of what I have learned.

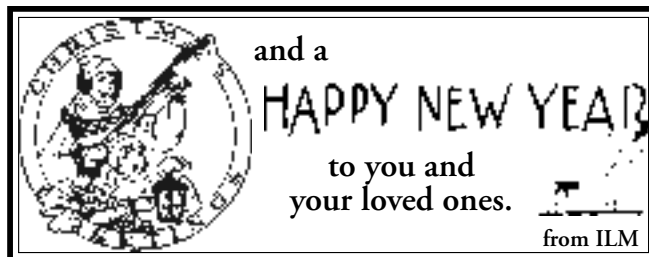
The innocent have no fear – they come in faith, having trust in those they love. When my sons were very young, we used to take walks together, and they would climb up on this short, brick wall running around a nearby church yard. Inevitably one of them would suddenly yell, “Catch me, Daddy!” and leap off the wall with joyful abandon into the air toward me. And I would catch him (sometimes with my heart pounding from the unexpected suddenness of it). He *knew* I would. The possibility that I would not be there for them did not occur to them. Today, I am beginning to see that when I am afraid and keep trying to be brave, struggling for a courage which eludes me, I could, instead, do what the innocent do: have faith in that which I love. I could trust God. I could take the leap.

The innocent delight in simple things. Babies can watch toes and fingers endlessly. Children can spend forever watching ants in the grass or looking at the clouds. Saints can spend their lives doing simple, everyday things, and yet, somehow, they see God in it all. Children and saints.

Those are the images I have every time I think of innocence. Both children and saints give simple, direct answers, even to complex, perplexing questions. Both live in a state of wonder. Have you ever seen the eyes of a child on Christmas morning, at his birthday party, or getting her first kitten or puppy? I believe that that state of wonder is not so much *what* we are seeing as *how* we are seeing. Do we still look with the delightful expectancy of a marvelous adventure around every corner of our lives? Do we still bring that boundless enthusiasm into whatever we do? We can.

Innocence is not ignorance or naiveté – it is a quality of God. It is a state of being more conscious of love, joy, and wonder than of anything else. It is a state of being open to receive and give God’s bounty with enthusiasm. It is a state of perpetual discovery. It is a state of freedom. Freedom that comes with purity of being.

There is a story I heard years ago about a family who had a young boy, about 4 years of age, and then they had another baby. They placed the baby into the nursery, which had an intercom to the parents’ room, so they could hear the baby. One day the young boy went into the baby’s nursery by himself. Over the intercom, the parents heard him walk over to the crib and say, “Baby, teach me about God again. I’m already starting to forget.” Forgetting is so easy to do in this world. I sometimes think that “growing old” consists largely of forgetting, forgetting what’s real, forgetting what’s important: losing our innocence. And that perhaps “growing up” is really remembering, remembering what’s important, growing into all we can be in the world, while moving through it as an innocent. Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.” Perhaps that is what those who radiate innocence really are after all: pure of heart. I know one thing for sure, when we look into the face of the innocent, we see the face of God. ★





IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO

by *Laura Kesten-Beaver,*
ILM Minister

As the story goes ...
Not so very long ago an older woman and a younger woman met and became fast friends. Over the years they spent much time together, sharing stories and secrets, laughter and tears, nurturing their intricate and delicate bond of love. It is said that the younger woman would often come to the older seeking knowledge and guidance, for the older one had the wisdom of experience which she had gathered over her years. Likewise, the older one would often go to the younger one to be reminded of the playfulness and carefreeness of youth, for the younger woman had the wisdom of innocence.

One day, they were sharing their stories as they had always done, when something went awry. Things were said, non-verbal things were expressed, and the two women became hurt, angry, and self-righteous. And, unwilling to let go of their hurt feelings and judgments, they parted, both believing they were justified in keeping open their wounds. And just to be sure, over the course of days, weeks, months, and then into years, they would occasionally rub their wounds and, seeing that they were still red and sore, each continued to maintain her self-righteousness. A whole decade passed.

After all those years had gone by, the older woman, unexpectedly, received a phone call from the younger woman. The conversation began cordially and politely. They exchanged stories about their lives and the lives of their children, stories about their careers, the pets that had come and gone, good movies and books, recipes – both trying to fill in the spaces of the past as well as the spaces in their conversation – until finally neither of them knew what to say next. And then the older woman could wait no longer. She needed to know why the younger woman had called. Why now after all these years? And so the younger one took in a deep breath and began to share about the ongoing battle she had had with a terminal disease, and that the recent prognosis offered her only a month to live. The older one, it is said, in a moment

suspended in time, felt the pain which she carried with her all those years now being replaced with an even greater pain – that of losing her friend. . .

The younger woman continued. Her words came slowly and thoughtfully, and through careful listening to the weakened voice, the older woman heard, “I just wanted you to know...” There was a pause, and then the small far-away voice continued, “I’m sorry.” Within a single breath, the wounds of the older healed instantly, miraculously. In fact, she could not even remember the details of that day which separated them. She could only remember all those years prior to that day when she felt so much love for the younger woman. And then, before another breath was taken the older one lovingly said, “Oh, I am so sorry.”

In the Bible, it says, “Be ye angry and sin not: Let not the sun go down upon your wrath . . . Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” (Eph 4:26)

I believe that God empowered us with the ability to perform a tiny miracle – to say, “I’m sorry.” Those two little words have the power to instantaneously heal open wounds – wounds for which even the greatest of doctors cannot otherwise find a cure. A great master once said, “We were not given the power to judge others, but with God’s love, we were given the power to forgive.”

Forgiveness starts with first forgiving ourselves and then asking for forgiveness, and it is through this process that we can forgive others. Forgiveness is the humbling of our egos to accept responsibility for our own actions. It matters not who began or ended the conversation of miscommunication – my mother used to say, “It takes two to tango and it takes two to argue.” And for the relationship to grow, it takes two to forgive and to let go.

And because of the power of forgiveness and the grace of God, this story does not end on a tearful note. In the course of that last month together, it is said that these two women talked often, sharing stories and secrets, laughter and tears, nurturing their intricate and delicate bond of love before they said their good-byes; they “Let not the sun go down upon [their] wrath.” ★

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES

CLASSES & PROGRAMS: JANUARY - APRIL 1997

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

Weekly Classes: Tuesdays 7:00-9:00 pm, Franklin Sq. Bldg., Ste. #100, 3724 Jefferson, 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.

"The Human Journey #1" Workshop: with Laura Kesten and Steven McAfee, in Austin, TX, Fri-Sun., April 3-5, 1998. This workshop will emphasize experiential techniques for coming into a greater knowing of ourselves as spiritual beings and of our lives as opportunities to express our divine heritage. Mark it on your calendar and stay tuned for more information.

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

"A Circle of Women": Fridays 7:00-10:00 pm, Franklin Sq. Bldg., Ste. #100, 3724 Jefferson, Austin, TX. Free of charge. This evening is specially dedicated in the celebration of ancient woman spirit, where women join together to experience the support of an uplifting, nurturing, and self-empowering circle. The dates are:

December 19
January 16
February 20
April 17

"The Writer Within": We will use specific writing processes to travel on a self-exploratory journey through the realms of our minds and hearts. Open to all from ages 15 to 105.

Sat.	January 3	8:30 am - 5:30 pm	Kalamazoo, MI	\$15
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"The Writer Within - Series": During this 6-week series we will journey through a wide range of writing processes to discover more of who we are. February 21st is an all day grand finale.

Thurs.	Jan. 8 - Feb. 21	7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Austin, TX	\$25
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"PeaceMaker": This workshop offers an opportunity to journey through the rich Iroquois story of the PeaceMaker, reliving its teachings and participating in transformational processes, thus bringing us closer to the heart of our own PeaceMaker within.

Fri-Sun.	April 24-26		Austin, TX	\$50
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Presented by STEVEN R. MCAFEE: For additional information, call Steven at 219-485-2167.

Tuesday Classes: 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm, Unity Church, 3232 Crescent Ave., Ft. Wayne, IN. Classes include spiritual teaching, group sharing, and meditation. All are welcome.

Friday Meditations: 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm, Ft. Wayne, IN (except on ILM retreat weekends). Our focus is on sharing the Love of God together in silent devotion. There is no teaching and no fellowship afterward.

Sunday Mystical Bible Study Series: 9:00 am - 10:00 am, 6228 Lombard Place, Ft. Wayne, IN, every Sunday (except on ILM retreat weekends).

ILM Classes & Programs presented by Steven McAfee continue on the following page.

ILM Classes & Programs presented by Steven McAfee (continued from page 4)

Sunday Services:

December 7: "Brigade of Light" worship service 10:45 am, YWCA Villa, Ft. Wayne, IN; this service will be followed by a potluck lunch and afternoon seminar until 4:30 pm.

January 11: "Brigade of Light" worship service 10:45 am, YWCA Villa, Ft. Wayne, IN.

January 11: "Open Door Chapel," service and lecture at 7:00 pm, 3426 Broadway, Ft. Wayne, IN.

Community Nights: Ft. Wayne, IN. Time and location varies. Once every 4-6 weeks, the ILM community here joins together for play and fellowship. Activities may include an inspirational movie and discussion; a community potluck, sharing and singing night; a family picnic in the park; or volunteering in a local service project.

Holiday Events: Christmas caroling party (adults and children), Tuesday, December 23, 6:30-8:30 pm, 6228 Lombard Place, Ft. Wayne, IN; refreshments will be provided.

RETREATS:

"Couples II - Making Time for Each Other":

Couples II is the second retreat designed especially for couples. We will focus on being more attentive to daily opportunities for connecting with our mate on deeper levels and on appreciating the time God has given us together. Each couple will have their own private room with a full bath. The registration fee includes room, meals (Sat. and Sun.) and workshop supplies. Becker Lodge at Camp Mack in Milford, IN.

Fri-Sun. January 2-4 Camp Mack, IN \$100 per couple

"Entering The Quiet":

Imagine waking up each morning in your own cabin in the woods, surrounded by the quiet sounds of nature. Imagine attending morning and evening meditations with other kindred souls in front of a crackling fire in a stone fireplace. Imagine spending the day in quiet contemplation, individual study, and prayer. You can browse through the library of spiritual and mystical books, walk about on eighty acres of wooded, rolling hills, and share heartfelt conversations with others. And as you enter the quiet, letting it settle upon you, you may hear the gentle voice of God's wisdom within you.

Fri-Sun. March 6-8 Gilchrist, Three Rivers, MI \$75

THE HUMAN JOURNEY # 1 WORKSHOP: IN SEARCH OF SELF

with Jim Gordon, Laura Kesten and Steven McAfee

Where: ILM Center, Austin, TX

When: Friday - Sunday, April 3-5, 1998

Cost: \$35

**This workshop will emphasize experiential techniques
for coming into a greater knowing of ourselves as spiritual beings,
and of our lives as opportunities to express our divine heritage.**

Mark this date on your calendar and stay tuned for more information.

DOES GOD HAVE A BEARD?

I was driving up Bee Caves Road in Austin, Texas one day with my 5 year old granddaughter, Christina.

"Who made the trees, Grandma?" she said.

"God made the trees," I replied.

"Did God make the buildings?" was her next question.

"God made man who made the buildings," I answered.

"What does God look like? Does God have a beard like Grandpa?"

"Christina," I said, "I think you'd better ask God."

"How do you do that?" she queried.

"You just close your eyes and ask God to come, so you can talk to him."

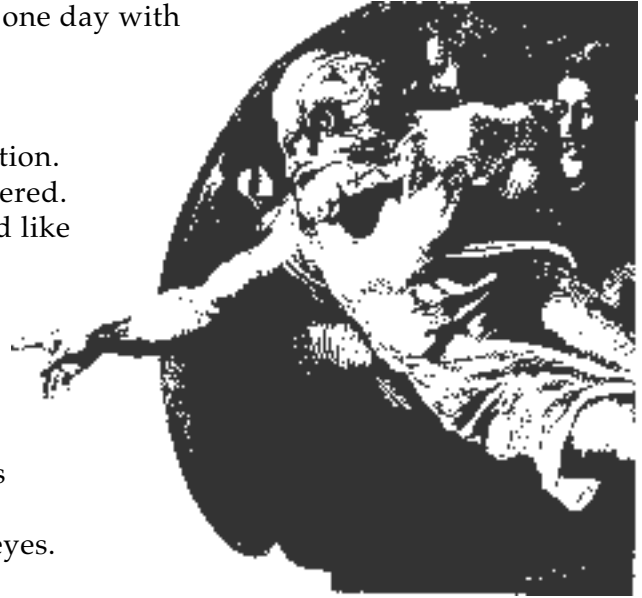
She closed her eyes, and after a few minutes of silence, she exclaimed with awe, "Oh Grandma! His eyes are like two suns!"

Once again she fell silent then finally opened her eyes.

"Well what did God say?" I asked.

"He said that sometimes he has a beard and sometimes he doesn't. It depends on who he is with. Sometimes his skin is different too."

I felt chills run through my body. This small child who had never had any religious instruction, had just seen and talked with God.



– Submitted by Cynthia Loft, from Austin, Texas.

Rules for Being Human

1. We will receive a body.

You may like it or hate it, but it will be yours for the entire period this time around.

2. We will learn lessons.

You are enrolled in a full-time informal school called life. Each day in this school you will have the opportunity to learn lessons. You may like the lessons or think them irrelevant and stupid.

3. There are no mistakes, only lessons.

Growth is a process of trial and error, experimentation. The "failed" experiments are as much a part of the process as the experiment that ultimately "works."

4. A lesson is repeated until learned.

A lesson will be presented to you in various forms until you have learned it. When you have learned it, you can then go on to the next lesson.

5. Learning lessons does not end.

There is no part of life that does not contain its lessons. If you are alive, there are lessons to be learned.

6. "There" is no better than "here."

When your "there" has become a "here" you will simply obtain another "there" that will, again, look better than "here."

7. Others are merely mirrors of us.

You cannot love or hate something about another person unless it reflects to you something you love or hate about yourself.

8. What we make of our life is up to us.

You have all the tools and resources you need. What you do with them is up to you. The choice is yours.

9. Our answers lie inside us.

The answers to life's questions lie inside. All you need to do is look, listen, and trust.

10. We will forget all this, because... we are human.

– Anonymous

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN ILM

Have you been taking good advantage of ILM's programs lately - our classes, workshops and retreats, Jim's counselings?

If so, you are cordually invited to become a Member of Inner Light Ministries. Becoming a member of ILM is a powerful way to affirm your affinity with us and the work we are doing in the world. In addition, we are in the process of developing special workshops for ILM members. So, if this sounds good to you, please fill out the form below:

PLEASE CONSIDER ME A MEMBER OF INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES:

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Mail to : ILM, PO Box 1086, Dripping Springs, TX 78620

There are no "strings attached" to ILM membership: you do not have to give up any other memberships you may hold, neither will you ever be solicited for money by ILM.

ILM NEWSLETTERS

(Individual issues are free of charge.)

Please check the volume(s) and underline the issue(s) you would like to receive:

- 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): January, April, August, November
- Volume 6** (1995): January, April, July, December
- Volume 7** (1996): March, June, September, December
- Volume 8** (1997): March, June, September

ILM BOOKS

By JAMES R. GORDON (\$6 each)

Check Item: _____ How many: _____

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

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

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P.O. Box 1086
Dripping Springs, TX 78620**

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 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.

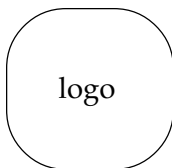
Service to humanity and the planet is ILM’s second major emphasis, and ILM encourages individual service, in any of a wide variety of possible forms, as a vital aspect of our daily experience. Please write or phone for more information.

AN EXCERPT

Some of us have grown up believing that only certain things are worthy of God’s time and attention. We might feel guilty or ashamed to talk with Him about the “little things” or the private things that concern us. And yet, there simply is no thing too small, too petty, or too private to share with Him. His infinite loving and understanding are always offered to us, and in having the courage to share openly with Him, we can begin to participate in a similar loving and understanding of ourselves and others as well.

from **The Knowing of God**
– Jim Gordon

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