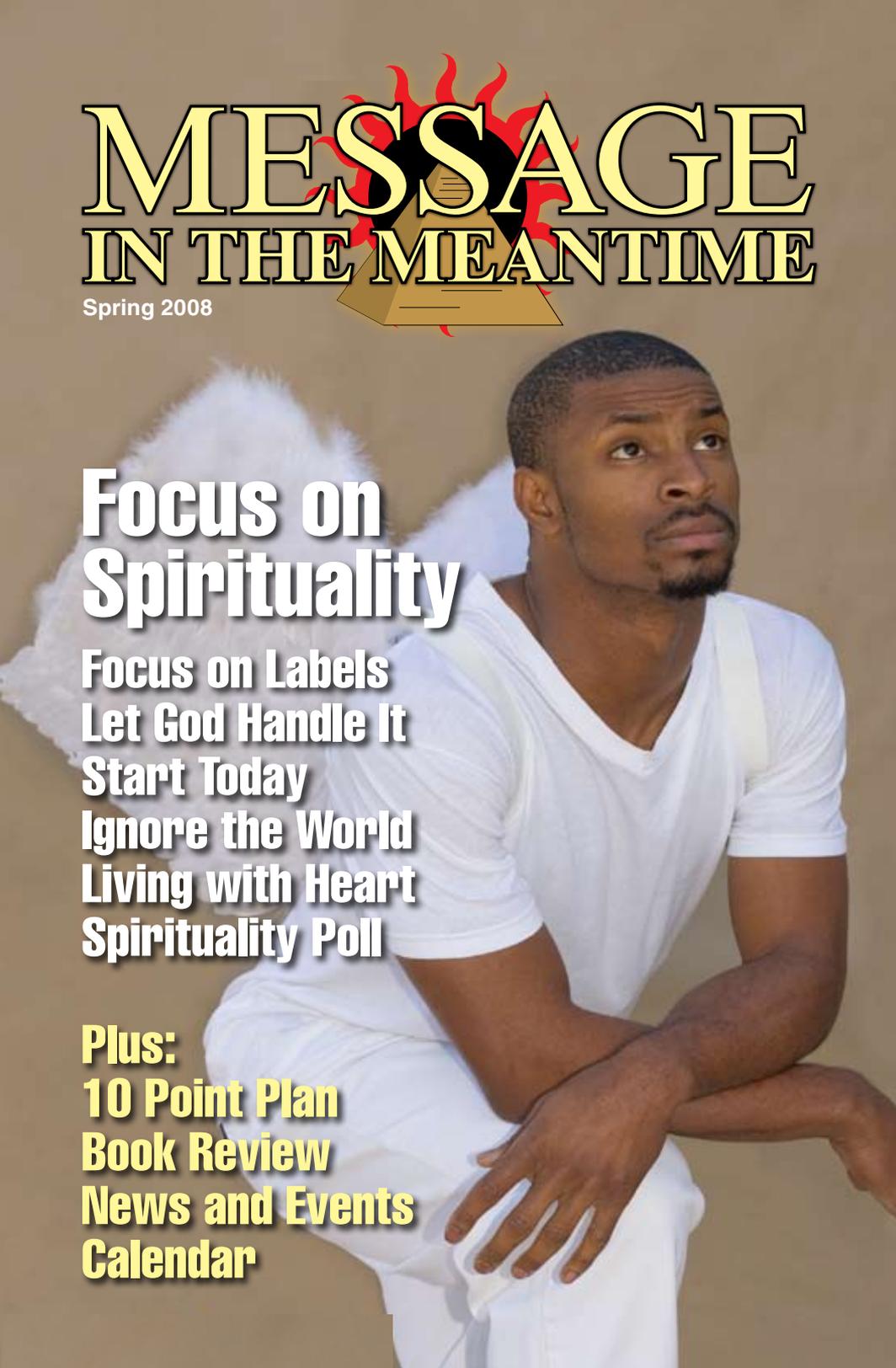


MESSAGE IN THE MEANTIME



Spring 2008

Focus on Spirituality

Focus on Labels
Let God Handle It
Start Today
Ignore the World
Living with Heart
Spirituality Poll

Plus:
10 Point Plan
Book Review
News and Events
Calendar

10 Point Plan

By Jeffrey C. King

Welcome to 2008. It is with a great sense of accomplishment that we existed 2007 and turned the page to an even more successful year of focused work as In The Meantime.

We spent the last six months of 2007 planning and strategizing about the future of In The Meantime. We asked our Board of Directors for direction. We asked you the community for your ideas that now shape our current 2008-2012 scope of work.

We hold steadfast in the present with a five year, ten point plan that we will strategically implement one step at a time.

Within the next five years In The Meantime will actualize its 10 point plan to:

- ▲ Secure additional space to house In The Meantime's full score of work.

- ▲ Develop a Mental Health/ Case Management Program that focuses on the needs of Black SGL, gay and bi-sexual men.

- ▲ Train and develop new and existing staff to facilitate onsite HIV/AIDS rapid testing.

- ▲ Develop a Youth Recreational/ Drop in Center to house our mentorship program, and computer training lab. This space will be used to offer job preparedness, and life skills development trainings.

- ▲ Facilitate meaningful research addressing Black gay, SGL, and bi-sexual men.

- ▲ Refine and future evaluate our existing Prevention Programs: My Life

My Style, The GAAME Plan, and the NIA Project.

- ▲ Develop, staff, and implement a Statewide Black Gay men's Taskforce that will address a multitude of issues to include community building, the church, the Black community, the gay community, policy, advocacy, research, and general Health specific to Black gay, SGL, and bi-sexual men.

- ▲ Fund and maintain our Social justice Bill Board Campaign that will focus on general community education and combating stigma relative to homophobia, and HIV/AIDS.

- ▲ Fund and future grow our existing Crystal Meth Campaign, The SOLA Meth Taskforce.

- ▲ Develop and implement a solid sustainable fundraising campaign and diversify funding streams.

We need your support to make these ideas a reality. Focus your attention on what is good about our community and how we can collectively make it even better.

To support this movement please contact our office at 323-733-4868, or mail your fully tax- deductible contribution to In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc., P.O. Box 29861, LA CA 90029.



Jeffrey C. King is the Founder and Executive Director of In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc.

Stop Chile! Not Those Labels Again

By Steven Palmer

Gay! Homosexual! Sissy! SGL! Bi-sexual! These are labels incited within a culture where everything and everyone is separated, defined, categorized and scrutinized for value, understanding and identity. However, does your sexuality really need to be defined?

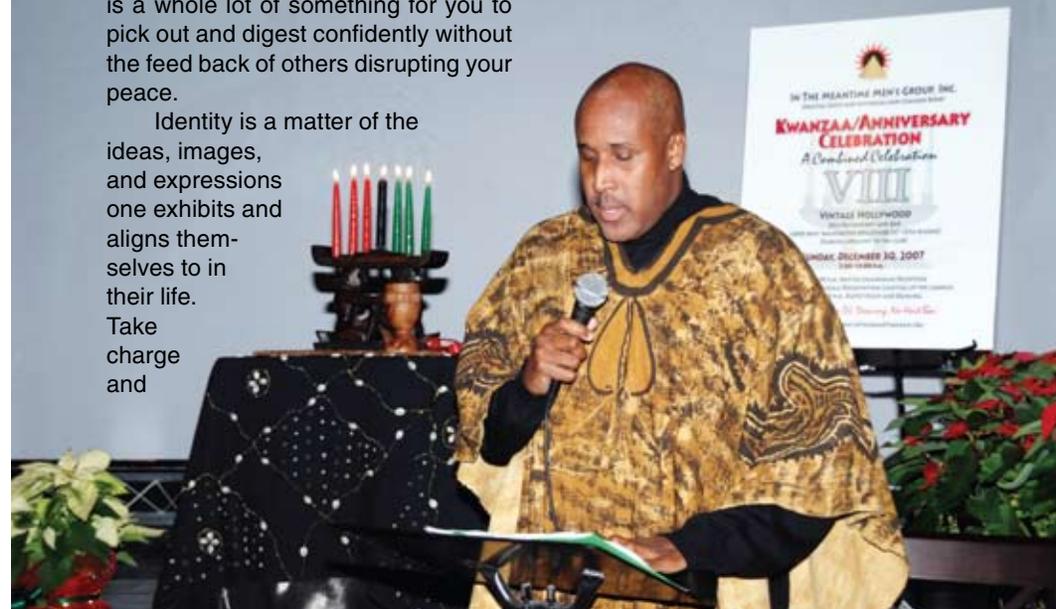
Labels can incite a plethora of contradictory interpretations and associations that vary from negative to positive. In a nutshell, every one is free to perceive, judge and formulate views within the paradigm of their own understanding. Therefore, we can sometimes find ourselves wasting valuable time and energy defending or shrinking uncomfortably within ourselves before a sea of relative meanings coming from a society stubbornly entrenched in varying levels of understanding.

So what shall you be called? Call yourself NOTHING because in the fluidity and infinite space of sexuality, which is only the expression of energy, is a whole lot of something for you to pick out and digest confidently without the feed back of others disrupting your peace.

Identity is a matter of the ideas, images, and expressions one exhibits and aligns themselves to in their life. Take charge and

govern your own sense of self respect by being courageous in authentic expression. Accept that you are not your ego, nor should you be subject to its maniacal immature tantrums used to defend itself to others who exhibit the same. How people label you in their head is none of your business. Therefore, let your power be in your response that is governed by the strengthening spiritual ideas and principles you have aligned with in your consciousness. There is nothing more defining and powerful than being and achieving your highest where you feel good about yourself, before others. You did not ask for anyone's permission to be born into this world, nor should you ask for their permission to be defined and accepted by them while you exist in this world. You are what you are and this is a label that is beyond description.

Steven Palmer, a Life Coach, can be reached at Sixx8nla@aol.com





Let God Handle It

By Flex

One day Mary, Jesus' mother revealed to her fiancé Joseph that she was pregnant. Now the interesting thing was that she had never had sex before. I'm sure Joseph himself was now starting to deal with his own thoughts and said to Mary, "How can you be pregnant if we've never slept together." Mary probably wasn't quite sure herself what to tell Joseph except that she was conceived through the Holy Spirit.

Now because Mary and Joseph never had sex with each other before it couldn't be humanly logical for her to become pregnant, especially if she was supposed to have been a virgin. But because Joseph cared so much for Mary and he didn't want her to be talked about or made fun of, he started making plans to take and have Mary sent away to a private location. There she would remain until after she would have delivered her baby. But while Joseph was asleep one night, an angel of the Lord spoke to him in a dream and said, "fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

Isn't it so amazing how when we think we've got God all figured out He

works in mysterious ways? The bible tells us "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD." (Isaiah 55:8) Usually when we try to handle things out all by ourselves we'll eventually cause a mess. But when we give God the permission to not only figure things out, but to handle things as well He'll always cause things to turn out Ok. As you begin the 2008 New Year don't forget to include Him in your daily plans. Whatever you may be facing let me encourage you to let God handle it. You'll be glad you did.

Take care and "be blessed."

Flex is the founder of BrothasNDaSpirit Ministries. His ministry is designed to help men who deal with life struggles relating to their sexual orientation and their personal relationship with God. BrothasNDaSpirit 'online' is "empowering brothas with knowledge and tools to change their world."



For these and other encouraging word products please visit www.BrothasNDaSpirit.com or write to BrothasNDaSpirit Ministries PO Box 93401 Los Angeles, CA 90093.

Start Today

By Rev. Gerald Green

Many times some of us allow others to define who we are and what we should do with our lives. Yet, our higher power (God/Love/Ultimate Reality) speaks to our heart each day to where we ought to go. For years I searched outside of myself to fill the empty space inside. I sought validation through sex in parks, bought friends with gifts who didn't care, tried to be all to family members only to find myself bankrupt.

Then I had an encounter with the Spirit of God that dwells within. The power of love turned my life around. As one has a moment of enlightenment, they become empowered to make a change for their highest good. One must be aware of how the law of attraction plays a role in our present and future reality. The power of what we think can determine what we experience.

Today I want to encourage us to be honest with ourselves, forgiving with ourselves and loving ourselves. God/Love/Reality isn't somewhere judging us, but loving us.

Empowerment starts today. Let's be free.



Rev. Gerald Green is an openly bisexual preacher who serves as the Assistant Pastor at Unity Fellowship of Christ Church. He is a native of Los Angeles and is currently attending West Los Angeles College majoring in Liberal Arts Studies.

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inthementimemen@aol.com

Funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Health, Office of AIDS Programs and Policy

Ignore the World and Listen to God

By Herndon L. Davis

Sometimes we make the mistake of listening to others who present themselves as representatives of God instead listening to God him/herself directly. As a result some of us will try to mold, bend, stretch, compress, and rebuild our lives altogether in order to fit the perceptions, expectations and the comfort levels of other people, institutions and entire societies.

We spend and waste our precious and valuable time trying to impress other people instead living our lives for God. We become obsessed with pleasing others instead of becoming obsessed with pleasing our divine Creator. And then we attempt to become religious by living up to a set of rigid rules that mostly were ordained by man and not by God.

Even worse we sometimes will allow other people to use our sexuality as the ultimate and the only object and sole essence of who we are. And sadly we allow the brilliance of our God-self to be reduced, diminished, and condemned to our sexual activity instead of being uplifted by the value of our internal worth.

As a result many of us will never

pursue our dreams and aspirations or allow ourselves to evolve into the full glory of our destiny. Instead many of us will allow our insecurities, self-doubt, paranoia, depression, angst, conflicts and warring consciousness about our sexuality to stop us at every pass, intersection and curve of life.

But there is a solution. The solution starts today. The solution starts now.

We must always remember that when the world tells us that we can't; we must stand up and declare to ourselves that we can and that we will.

When the world says that we must change who we inherently are in order to succeed in life; we must instantly know that our gifts, talents and resources will always make room for us as beautiful God-ordained beings.

When the world says that our life must be repudiated in order to have joy and happiness; we must quickly revel in the knowledge that our joy comes from the inside and that it is tied to our connection to God and not through our connection to our fellow man.

Finally we must remember that our relationship with the most High God is the only thing that counts, matters and ever should be considered. It simply

does not matter what the preacher, teacher, deacon, mama, daddy, sister, cousin, aunt, uncle, grandparents, co-workers, best friend, nosey neighbor all have to say.

What only matters is our relationship with the Creator of the universe, the life of all life, and the ruler of mankind, our one and true God. Through our God both you and I can become absolutely anything and everything!

Through our relationship with God we can celebrate the diversity and the love that was placed in our personhood.

And through this relationship we can celebrate ourselves! We can celebrate being gay and still continue to soar as emanations of God. I lovingly thank the Creator for this precious gift while I continue to ignore the rest of world that says otherwise. And so I invite you to do the same.



Herndon L. Davis is an author, lecturer and TV/Radio Host. He can be reached directly at www.hernondavis.com

Right Side of the Wrong Bed

RIGHT SIDE OF THE WRONG BED

A novel by Frederick Smith
Kensington Publishing Corp.
260 pages

Reviewed by Stanley Bennett Clay



Of the top ten major cities in America, Los Angeles is arguably the least ghettoized. In the core metropolis few neighborhoods have an overwhelming predominance of one ethnic/cultural/social group over another, particularly when it comes to people of color. African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, Caribbeans, Eastern Europeans, whites, straights, openly gay men and lesbians, Muslims, Jews, and folks of every imaginable multi-racial combination comfortably share—there are exceptions of course—common walls, fences, block parties, neighborhood watches, schools, restaurants, nightclubs, barbershops, day care centers, and gossip. Even one of the city's most popular churches, Agape, boasts an SRO rainbow coalition each Sunday morning. L.A. is quintessential Obamaland.

It is against the colorful backdrop of this ditzzy but delightful city where no one is really black or white, that Frederick Smith sets his ditzzy but delightful sophomore novel, "Right Side of the Wrong Bed," a story where nothing is really black or white or exactly what it may seem.

When it comes to love our narrator Kenny Kane, a handsome thirty-three-year-old African American and otherwise intelligent college administrator, is an educated fool. Not only did he not see it coming, but financed court cost and paternity suit battles leveled against DaVon, his drop dead gorgeous firefighter partner of six years who had at least three children by two baby-mamas during the time of their 'committed' relationship. Only after all of this does Kenny put the brother out of his sprawling home in the toney hills of Monterey Park.

Five months later at a gay bar in West Hollywood, Kenny is hit on by Jeremy Lopez, a six feet tall, baggy low-rise jean wearing, twenty-one-year-old Mexican/Dominican straight up East L.A. hottie boy-toy. Sparks fly and before he knows what hits him, Kenny is caught up in a whirlwind of sex and romance with this youngster.

But one incident after another involving drunken club hopping, police-raided frat parties, jealous ex's, arson

investigations, unexplained hickies, and the plain old capriciousness of youth, keep Kenny in a tailspin. But even as best friends Carlos, and even his mother caution him about being on the right side of the wrong bed ("Do I have to come down there and slap some sense into you?" straight-shooting Mom warns him), Kenny is, alas, stuck on stupid when it comes to Jeremy.

And one can almost see why. Almost. Aside from his golden good looks, Jeremy is a passionate lover who is sexually accommodating in every way imaginable. He is young and proud, a macho young homosexual very much in touch with his sensitive side, and not the least bit concerned with the public display of affection when it comes to his man which he lavishes with hugs and sloppy kisses at taco stands, in front of chi-chi gyms, at family gatherings, on campus, anywhere he feels like it, which is everywhere, knowing that his youthfulness is giving his older lover a new shot in the arm.

And Jeremy is very smart for his age (if not very mature), and talented, a poet who was a contestant on "Teen Jeopardy." He is loyal to his family and friends (if not to his lovers, of which he has many) and dedicated to his college studies and efficient at his job as a student affairs aide for a city college.

But the kid has a lot of problems, most of them related to just growing up. Eventually we realize that Kenny has not grown up either, as he forgives almost unforgivable transgressions and totes too much of Jeremy's devil-may-care baggage, not to mention a lot of his own, time and time again.

But as exasperating as Kenny can be (like his mother, we want to slap some sense in him too) the poor guy is just unlucky at love, even though he tends to bring the bad luck on himself.

There are hints in the story that even before Kenny's cheating fireman, he was batting zero in the romance department although he'd been up to bat several times. As we listen closely to his narration, we come to realize that Kenny is just a poor sap in deep denial who should have stayed a little longer in the therapy he was once undergoing.

The story breezes along gleefully though, fueled by Kenny's endearing, if frustrating emotional bumbling, and Jeremy's charming and irresponsible youth, but just when it seems that there may be a glimmer of hope for these May-December lovers, tragedy strikes, adding an unexpected but deeply moving poignancy.

Late in the story, writer Smith gives Kenny a beautifully rendered thought on all the beds we occupy through life, and how we must take responsibility for the beds we make for ourselves (even though emotionally, I doubt if Kenny ever bothered to change a sheet). Nonetheless, this is the best piece of writing in a novel that overall consists of wonderful and easily digestible prose; fast paced, at times funny, very conversational, and human.

I suppose that's what makes us like Kenny, in spite of all his misstep, bad judgments, and denial; and why we like Jeremy, in spite of all his naughty, childish little ways. They both possess that special save: humanity.

Stanley Bennett Clay has received three NAACP Theatre Awards for writing, directing, and coproducing the critically



acclaimed play Ritual, as well as a Pan African Film Festival Jury Award for the film adaptation. The author of Diva and In Search of Pretty Young Black Men, he lives in Los Angeles. His latest novel is Looker.

In The Meantime News and Events All Over L.A.



Anniversary and Kwanzaa Celebrated

In The Meantime closed 2007 in great style and purpose as we celebrated both eight years and eighth Annual Kwanzaa Celebration at the posh community venue, Vintage Hollywood.

More than 100 community members and program participants join the staff and board of directors of In The Meantime for a late Sunday afternoon of reflection, lighting of the seven Kwanzaa Candles, an amazing buffet prepared by Teddy's Chef Services, a over view on the theme was presented by Steven Palmer.

We closed the evening with a campaign toast and dancing to the tunes of DJ Ki Ki. The evening left no stones unturned.

ITMT Presents at AAMSM in Oakland

Kudos to In The Meantime's dream team Greg Wilson and Otis Nelson as they were featured presenters at the Oakland AAMSM HIV/AIDS Conference. They presented FUBU, Designing and implementing Home Grown Intervention specifically for African American gay men. Can you say smashing?

Presidential Dialogue at Lucy Florence

In The Meantime was excited to participate in one of the ground breaking community event that was hosted at the Historic Lucy Florence community room and Coffee House. Jasamyne Cannick facilitated an amazing panel of community activist that featured Executive Director of In The Meantime, Jeffrey King, Jewel Thais Williams, xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Obama got the most votes from the room of community members who braved the pouring rain to be present and active in a powerfully spirited dialogue on the Black SGL community and the primary election.

ITMT Hosts Community Events

The Month of February 2008 brought the National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, In The Meantime hosted its 5th



annual Community Town Hall Forum, Bridging The Gap, The Black Community and Research, moderated by Nina T. Harawa, MPH, Ph.D., highlighting local research presentations by Trista A. Bingham, MPH, M.S., Greg Wilson, In The Meantime's Program Coordinator, and John K. Williams, M.D.

Then came National Love Day, (Valentines Day), and in honor of the season of Love, In The Meantime secured Jenenne MacKline to host a two part series on Self Love, the Newly Wed Game for young Black gay men, The Dating Game Show for young Black gay men, a night of chocolate roses at Club Metro's for KISS, where we sponsored the Sexy Lips Contest a focus on celebrating every aspect of who we are with a focus on the full lips that use to bring Black people shame.

In The Meantime hosted the opening session along with Sisters xxxxxxxx at the Power World Conference where we brought young Black gay men and women together with elders. In The Meantime was pleased to provide 10 deserving young people scholarships to attend this history making conference experience.

King Day Celebration Features Celebrities

In The Meantime welcomed the new year of 2008 with an inspirational King Day Celebration held on January 15th that featured three amazing speakers, Rev. Jenenne MacKline, of Living In The Light Ministry, Doug Spearman of Noah's Arc, and the one and only Valerie Spencer, founder of xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Tim MacAfee Lewis and his soulful vocal group lifted the house with a combination of gospel, and R&B.

Three awards were presented to community leaders and humanitians that contributed immensely to the Black community wellness that included: Maurice Jamal, Cynthia Davis, and Wendell Carmichael. The Gay and Lesbian Centers Village at Ed Gould continues to be a perfect fit to host the King Day Celebration. More than 150 community members were present to experience what will go down in In The Meantime's history as the most memorable King Day Celebration ever.



Calendar for March for the Year

Tuesday March 4, 2008
HIV & the Black community: A Historical Perspective, This educational presentation will engage participants in a fuller discussion on the historic movement of HIV/AIDS in the Black Community and where we are today. Facilitated by Richard Hamilton

Tuesday March 11, 2008
All about Me, This inner active session will explore, likes/dislikes about key members of your family. You will explore your deepest feelings about your relationship with your parents and/or siblings. This session will be based on a unique question and answer book written by Philipp Keel.

Tuesday March 18, 2008
All about Me, This inner active session will explore your views and perspectives on GOD. Describe God; describe your most spiritual moment, how do you picture the end of the World? These are some of the questions that will frame this interactive session. This session will be based on a unique question and answer book written by Philipp Keel.

Tuesday March 25, 2008
Open Group

Thursday, March 20, 2008,
Spring Begins/ BOUNCE II
Roller Skate Party
Time/ Location: TBA

Tuesday, July 1, 2008
In The Meantime Annual Pride
Reception
Time/ Location: TBA

Friday, August 8, 2008,
Wellness for Life Black Men's Health
Conference
Opening VIP Reception
Time/ Location: TBA

Saturday, August 9, 2008,
Wellness for Life Black Men's Health
Conference
Time/ Location: TBA

Friday, September 12- Sunday 14,
2008
9th Annual Umoja Retreat
Time/ Location: TBA

Wednesday, October 29, 2008
The Black Party, 'The MASK'
Time/ Location: TBA

Sunday, December 28, 2008
Kwanzaa, 9th Year Anniversary
Celebration
Time/ Location: TBA

The ITMT Spirituality Poll

Are you a Christian?
No: 19%
Yes: 81%

Do you attend a traditional
religious church or institution?
No: 31%
Yes: 69%

Do you feel supported by your
church?
No: 44%
Yes: 56%

What is the name of your
church?
Agape
Full Harvest International
West Angeles
unity fellowship
First Lutheran
Living In The Light Ministry
First AME

Do you attend a church that
supports all people and their life
styles?
No: 31%
Yes: 69%

Are you active in the church?
No: 37%
Yes: 63%

Does heaven and hell exist after
life?
No: 37%
Yes: 63%

Living
with
Heart,
Passion
and
Joy for
2008

By Rev. Jenenne R. Macklin

What an exciting way to live your life with heart, passion and joy. living with heart you keep your heart open and live in the realm of possibilities. it would call you not to hold anything against yourself or others. living with passion you make the choice daily to live an authentic life, with integrity anchored in your truth. living with joy you hold total appreciation for your life, all life, knowing that at its core life is the all pervading energy of Spirit, and goodness and it—joy is more permanent than happiness.



Rev. Jenenne R. Macklin is Founder and Spiritual Leader of Living in the Light Ministry in Los Angeles, California.