



January 2018

## "Who's on Your List?" by Gary Wheeler

We've just come through the Christmas season, with Santa "making a list and checking it twice." Well, what does your list look like?



I'm not talking about whether you have been naughty or nice (ask your wife that question!) I'm asking you what your "Ashram Invitation List" looks like.

What? You don't have one? Well, it's time to put one together.

You see, the longer we participate or attend something, the less likely we are to think about inviting someone else to go with us. There are several reasons for that:

First, the "Novelty Excitement" has worn off. When we first go to a new place, be it a restaurant or community event or even an Ashram - and it's really good - we quickly tell others all about it, recommend it to them, even invite them to come with us the next time. But once we have gone a few times, we stop talking about and inviting others. I mean, when's the last time you invited someone to McDonald's? Ok, that example might not be the best,

but you get the idea. We get used to quality of an event - even if it is good - and our excitement dwindles. We stop inviting others once the novelty fades away.

Second, we love the "Familiarity Experience." We get so used to the people who already participate in the event that we become comfortable with the group. Everyone knows each other and grows to love each other in that wonderfully terrific experience. We like familiarity, and stop inviting others.

Finally, we forget the "Eternity Inevitability." We assume that those who have been with us for many events will always be there, that we all will continue to come together. However, God does call each of us home to eternity someday. We fail to invite because we forget that eternity is inevitable.

The same is true for churches and the Ashram movement. If you have been attending the Ashram for a while now, the novelty has faded; you know what to expect, and even when it is spiritually uplifting, well, we tend to expect that. We also get familiar. Humans really don't like change, and the more we are familiar with something, the less likely we want change, including those who attend with us. And, we must be honest that for many of us, the gray and white hairs are dominating the scenery up top. The Lord is going to call each of us home, some sooner than others.



- > The people on our Ashram Invitation List.
- > Lou Hansford had eye surgery in December.
- > Garnet Ryder had arm surgery in December.
- > Pray for the Austin (TX) Ashram (Jan 11-13) and Arkansas Ashram (Jan 26-28).

**2018 Ashram Dates: August 2-5**

## "Who's on Your List?" (continued)

Without inviting persons to the Ashram, whether they have never attended or haven't attended recently, our Ashram will gradually shrink.

A few months ago, I read in an Ashram's newsletter how everyone who used to go to their Ashram was dying, and unless they did something about it soon, their Ashram would have to discontinue. That article was written more than a decade ago, and was the last newsletter posted online! I can only hope they lost the password to update the site.

So, how do you create an "Ashram Invitation List?"

First, pray! Obvious? Yes, but what are you praying? Certainly the Lord wants people to grow in their faith, so you don't need to ask Him for something He already wants. Instead, pray that God will reveal who He wants you to invite to this year's Ashram, and then opportunities to do so. Leave whether they say, "yes" to the Holy Spirit; our job is to share the opportunity. Then,

in that spirit of intercessory prayer, begin creating a list of people the Lord brings to your heart. Have your list with you when you are doing your devotions and praying daily.

Second, look around at the persons in your family, who go to church with you, to Christians (or seekers) with whom you already have a relationship with. Be open to the Lord speaking softly, "That one!"

Third, invite enthusiastically, but not obnoxiously. No one wants to hear that you know the most spiritual place in the world; they need to figure it out for themselves. Don't tell them, "You need this;" that's the Spirit's job. Be positive when you invite, not pushy. And don't forget a brochure.

Fourth, continue to invite. Asking once usually isn't enough. Invite them again as the Spirit prompts.

Remember, you were once invited to the Ashram. Share the gift.

## Interested in going to the Holy Land?



Sailing on the Sea of Galilee

Myra and I recently went on a Holy Land trip, and found it to be a very spiritually uplifting experience. More than any sight-seeing trip, we felt it was more of a

spiritual pilgrimage as we walked in the steps of Jesus. And we wondered: Would any of our Ashram family like to go with us on our next trip? Well, would you?

We are planning a Holy Land trip October 28-November 7, 2019 and a Summer/September 2020 Oberammergau Passion Play trip, traveling with [Educational Opportunities](#). If you have any interest (even fleeting interest), [email Gary](#), call him @ 937-204-4400 to get a brochure, or go to [www.germantownchurch.com/grow/holy-land-trip-2019](http://www.germantownchurch.com/grow/holy-land-trip-2019). We're giving you plenty of time to pray, think, and save.

## Special Dates



### Birthdays

Jan 1 Sean Lough  
Jan 17 Don Stephens  
Jan 29 Micki Rose  
Jan 31 Frankie Butcher

### Anniversary

None this month



January's Stanley Snippet:

"Today my life will be a mess or a message. I choose."

E. Stanley Jones, "The Way."