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SERVANT-LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY **June 10-13, 1999 - Indianapolis**

General Session featuring Margaret Wheatley

Well, it's wonderful to stand up here and see all of you here. I guess I spoke here in '95 and it was in smaller groups of earnest seekers who were trying to figure out this thing called servant leadership. To see probably double the number of people here makes me feel very grateful to you for coming. I want to say that as I travel around the world and as I do get to talk to just about every variety of organization that I can imagine, I feel impelled to tell you that the world needs you. Not only that, the world is waiting for you. And this is a very critical time where we're balanced between promise and peril. Obviously we're all choosing for the promise. And this is the time when if we don't figure out what's happening...

(Phone ringing) Do I need to take that? It's amazing how we don't know how to turn these phones off when we need to. (laughing) It's probably a plan by Sprint to increase our phone usage. (laughing)

What I would like to do this morning, I just wanted to offer you some of the thoughts I'm having, about how natural servant leadership is. And I hope that in giving you my thoughts, that you leave here with a stronger belief, that you represent the future. And that without you, this future will not happen. I hope that in my words, I give you more courage, more clarity, and a greater sense that this a worldwide movement your engage in and not just some strange ideas that happen to appeal to you. This really is a movement in a direction of being able to create a future that we all want. I feel a strong imperative. I feel the peril of this moment, that if we don't learn how to come together differently, in our organization, in our communities, in our families. If we don't learn how to come together differently, then we are doom. Now this is said a little more elegant by Gary Snyder, the American poet. He wrote this in the sixties, that's rather depression to me because he had already given up by then. And here we are at the millenium. But he called this poem, *For the Children*.

The rising hills. The slopes of statistics lie before us. The steep climb of everything going up, up as we all go down. In the next century they say our valleys and pastures, we can meet there in peace, if we make it. To climb these coming crest, one word to you, to you and your children. Stay together, learn the flowers, go light. Stay together, learn the flowers, go light.

I believe that is our work. I want to talk about each of those things. One of the strange things going on at the end of this millenium in western cultural is that we have become, I believe victims of many different beliefs. I'm only going to talk about two of them today. The first is the belief that we can ignore time. The belief that we can negotiate with time, that we have in fact forgotten about things like natural rhythms, about cycles, about change, as part of the natural process. And instead we believe that it's a straight trajectory into the future, and we can go as fast as we please. Of course this moves us away from nature, from rhythm, from a sense of place, and we are really struggling with this. I believe that our current effort to try and ignore time and growth and stages and cycles. I believe it is truly driving us crazy.

Well, Pablo Neruda, many years ago also, so even given you now prophets, who spoke a long time ago to us. But he wrote this poem, probably in the '60s. He was asking us to stop. This is a bit of familiar scene. Lawrence Vanderpost, the Great South African writer, photographer, philosopher, said that things had gotten so serious in the world that he really fear for us. And when asked, he just died two years ago in his nineties. Someone asked him, "Well, what would you recommend, Sir Lawrence? What would you recommend that we do?" He said, "I would declare a year of silence." And Pablo Neruda is saying the same thing, but for this purpose. He said, "Now we will count to twelve and we will all keep still. For once on the face of the earth, let's not speak in any language. Let's stop for one second and not move our arm so much. It would be an exotic moment. Without rush, without engines, we would all be together in a sudden strangeness. If we were not so single minded, in keeping our lives moving and for once could do nothing, perhaps..." (this is the part of this poem I love.) "Perhaps a huge silence might interrupt this sadness of never understanding ourselves, and with threatening ourselves with death. Perhaps a huge silence might interrupt this sadness of never understanding ourselves with death."

Now since I'm a practical person, I'll imagined now that the advice you're going to take from what I said so far is to go back into your organizations and tell everyone to shut-up. (laughing) That is not what I'm saying. I'm on a slightly higher philosophical plane right now, okay. (laughing) But I do want us to complicate the fact that as we go faster and faster on this great trajectory toward the future, that is only making us sad. That is time for us as leaders to realize we cannot create the future we want by increasing the speed of change, by increasing the hurriedness and the franticness. And at some point, this where I become revolutionary. At some point, it's up to us to say, "We must take time to think. We must take time to reflect." I think this is one of the most courageous acts a servant leader can do right now, is to attempt to slow things down, so that people can think about what there doing. It's a revolutionary act to reflect these days. It's not in our job description. Luckily it's in our species description. What frustrates me so much is understanding the great gift of human consciences and the ability to notice and to reflect and to learn. And then to see how we are pretending that is not a gift to the planet. And instead of celebrating and honoring and trying to raise up this capacity for self awareness and reflection. We simply say we're too busy.

Now I'm going to talk about servant leadership is natural, and I want to tell you a story I heard on NPR, must have been last fall when there were so many terrible hurricanes. There was a geologist being interviewed. He was a beach geologist, so his field of study was beaches and sand and the like. And at the time he was being interviewed, there was a storm. One of the large hurricanes was pounding the outer bank off the Carolinas. And he was being interviewed about what hurricanes do to beaches. Now, we all know what hurricanes do to beaches and beach houses and such. We feel they're very destructive, right? They destroy homes and take down power lines and take away even sand, and whole beaches disappear in a hurricane. So this interviewer was talking to this beach geologists about this hurricane going on. And then this is what got my attention. The geologists said, "You know I can't wait to get out on those beaches again once these storms have passed. And I hope to get out there in the next 24 hours." And the interviewer said, "What do you expect to find out there?" and I was listening, and I thought he was going to talk about all the destruction he was going to find. What he said really surprised me. He said, "I expect to find a new beach." Now wouldn't it be wonderful if we could be in the same relationship with life as that beach geologist, where we would look for newness rather than predictability, where we would look to see what just happened rather than agonize that what we wanted didn't happen? You know the theme of this conference is navigating the future and one of the things I'm struck by is I haven't the faintest idea what the future is. How do you navigate towards something when you don't know what that something is? That question I will answer, by the way.

Back to the beach, however. So much of our focus right now is against meanness and against surprise. These are the other elements of life that are inescapable. When you look at anything in the living world, all you see is newness and creation. The scripture "Behold, I make all things new," feels to me like a biological statement these days. It's constant newness. But as a leader, as someone who is trying to help an

organization move to the future, you have to ask yourself what is your position towards newness, towards creativity. So often, we are surprised by newness in a way that makes it impossible for us to welcome it. We actually see newness as an affront to our plans. We see other people's creativity as an affront to our leadership, and this is a very dangerous place if we're trying to be a servant leader because we are trying to encourage life. I just want to say that part of the job description of a servant leader for me is that we have to be those who welcome newness, who look to be surprised rather than are fearful of surprise, who look for difference rather than try to ask people to conform and to move into all those wonderful boxes of our org charts. And this is something we each need to contemplate. What is our relationship to surprise and to newness? What is our relationship to creation? That's the bigger question.

Could you give me a glass of water down there, please? Thank you.

Now the other big stumbling block of our time is not just time and our resistance to newness. It's this strange belief that we exist as individuals separated from one another. This is the dominate belief, I believe, in Western society. In Africa, in any communal or indigenous society, we see the other end of the spectrum, which is a belief only in community. But somewhere in there, there's got to be a new balance. I believe it's up to us to discover how we use our individual creativity as a gift to the whole and how we move away from this, what Einstein called, the belief in our separate existences is what Einstein called an "optical delusion." You know, I look at it. You and I could see 1,200 separate individuals or I can look out at you and try and re-see, try and remember that we are all connected. In Buddhism, in Tibetan Buddhism, the root of all suffering comes from our belief that we are not connected. The source of suffering is the believe that we are independent actors. So in... we know this in every spiritual tradition. It's just that we in the West created this great mythos that you and I exist as individuals and that the purpose of our life, the purpose of our life is to grow into who we are for ourselves and not for others. I was very struck. I was re-reading a little bit of Greenleaf's work on the plane yesterday, and I was very struck by his understanding that servant leadership starts as a feeling, a desire to serve others that then becomes a commitment to move that desire into practice, to actually take on the great courageous task of serving others. But it starts first with a desire, with a feeling. This is of course very similar in Hinduism and in Buddhism of the notion of the bodhisattva, which is, which was just recently defined to me. I love this definition: "One whose heart leaps out at human suffering and desires to help alleviate it. One whose heart leaps out." And of course, and this is the real advice. The work of being a servant leader then once one's heart has leapt out, the work is to be courageous enough to keep your heart open. And not to be so overwhelmed by insult or failure or pain or suffering that you close up your heart and walk back and say, "No. No. No. That's too much. I can't deal with this now." Certainly, one of the great struggles of right now, every week is that there is something that goes on that requires our heart to leap out and to try and connect with human suffering. If it's Littleton, if it's in Kosovo, if it's in Sudan, if it's in Nigeria, if it's in Rwanda. There are many opportunities for our hearts to leap out, but I'm personally finding that being asked so often to extend my compassion around the world makes me very tired and quite overwhelmed. And therefore, I'm more in touch with what was also described to me, and it's clearly in Greanleaf's writing. If we're going to serve other people, it takes enormous courage. It takes enormous courage to keep our heart open and to believe that we are big enough to hold that much suffering. So you have not signed up for an easy responsibility, but I don't think you signed yourself up in your heads, anyway. You signed up to explore servant leadership because you're heart leapt out at some moment towards your community or towards a fellow human being. Now that is the great gift that is given to us, that we have hearts that were willing to open and now the real courageous act is to figure out how on earth to keep them open because the world only confronts us with more suffering, not with less.

Eudora Welty had a wonderful description, she was an American Southern writer. She had a wonderful description of her work. She said, "My continuing passion is to part a curtain that invisible veil of indifference that falls between us and that blinds us to each other's presence, each other's wonder, each other's human plight." This veil of indifference is what you are about. To part this curtain, to move it back

and to say in any organization, in any setting, "There is more here. There is more capability. There is more talent. There is more creativity. There is more humaneness here in these people than others have seen."

In this great myth of individualism, in this great myth of individualism, we have created a culture of people who are often selfish, who are often self-serving, who are often greedy, who are often indifferent to each other's presence, wonder or human plight. But it feels imperative for me to say that the people we are faced with now, those negative behaviors of cynicism, and anger, and withdraw, and paralysis - which are worldwide in my experience - those negative behaviors are not who we are. And it's not those negative behaviors that made your heart leap out. Whenever your heart leapt out, and you knew you needed to serve, that was a moment to recall because at that moment, you knew the truth about human nature. You knew who we are. And the motivation to be a servant leader is always, in my experience, from the recognition of who we really are. Beyond the cynicism, beyond the dependency, beyond the paralysis, beyond workers and colleagues and communities who don't know how to talk to each other anymore, beyond all of that you knew at some point that in the human being, there is enormous capacity. And you wanted to help bring that capacity forth. Now, it's interesting that I'm putting this in the past tense, isn't it? I'm struck by that right now. I'm trying to recall you to the moment when things were most clear, but obviously I'm assuming that they aren't as clear now. And it is my experience that as we set out on this journey to be a servant leader in this future that is unknown, there are so many pitfalls. There are so many black holes along the way that you can forget, "Why in God's name did I ever take this on?" And for me, the work is always to recall the clarity I had that lead me into anything. And that clarity is always a profoundly spiritual moment, of the recognition of the truth of something. And in this case, I believe that the clarity that was spiritual, the truth that you recognized was that human beings are not by nature selfish, greedy, angry or cynical. You must have seen the truth of us to be sitting here today. And even if you are not feeling the truth of who we are as a species here today, I'm asking you to recall that moment so you can bring it forward. This is who I think we are as a species. I think one of the great gifts of humanity to the planet which unfortunately we're just not demonstrating very clearly, but the great gift of who we are to the planet, it is not only that we are self-reflective, not only that we have consciousness. Those are big, but it's not all.

We are by nature, a species that seeks intimacy. There's a new book by a biologist called, *The Intimacy of Love or The Biology of Love* and it's his belief that the reason you and I even learn developed language was because we wanted to be together. So it's a great impulse, and this is Aberto Maturano that I'm quoting now. "The great impulse in human evolution was a desire to be together." That's what led us to figure out how to talk, how to speak, how to communicate. And then the other great desire when you see these together, you see how wonderful we are. The other great desire is that we have a need to make meaning of things. We're constantly looking. It doesn't matter who you are, unless you're dead, you constantly seek to understand why. So we have this great impulse for meaning. We have this great desire and need to be together and we have this great gift of consciousness. And it is each of those desires that are available through servant leadership and that have been denied through every repressive controlling form of leadership. If we'd been into the command and control, "I'll tell you what to do," the enormous dishonoring that's involved in that approach to leadership is something I feel acutely. And I know that other people feel that. In response to being dishonored through command and control leadership, by being put into a box, by being told what to do... in response to all of that, people become what we have now. People become angry. People become cynical. People become depressed. People become paralyzed. We created those bad behaviors we didn't recognize who we were. So much of our lives right now are leading us away from each other. The focus on individualism, the focus on careers, the focus on self-servingness, the inability to simply sit on a porch - I'm going to sound real old-fashioned here - but to sit together to notice each other's wonder, each other's presence, each other's human plight. We don't have time. And I believe that it is this focus that we don't have time, this belief we don't have time, this belief that we don't need each other, this belief that we can make it our own, that there really is such a thing as an individual... I believe this is what is killing us.

There is a wonderful song from Nigeria that I will not sing because I can't remember the melody, but the lyric is... it's about individualism. The lyric goes, "Oh, to be an individual is a very bad thing. Ah! To be an individual is very bad thing. Oh, God! Oh, God! Please, God, don't make me an individual." So I believe that Greenleaf knew so much, was accessing so much what I would call 'internal wisdom' that if we're looking for ways of leading and the criteria of a successful servant leader is that out of those that we serve are healthier and wiser and freer and autonomous and perhaps even want... they loved our leadership so much that they want to serve others also. I believe that Greenleaf and many great spiritual teachers were simply signaling to us that we are naturally a species that wants to be together, that needs to be free, that needs to be autonomous and that needs and will naturally tend towards its own health. All of life, all of life is life affirming. All of life seeks its own health. It doesn't need us to do it and I believe more and more for people in organizations that people don't need us to make them healthy. People need us as leaders to trust that their healthfulness is in them already. And people need us as leaders to figure out the processes by which people can reconnect with each other. If you believe that the health is already there, then your task as a leader becomes figuring out how to evoke it. If you believe that the pathology is the only thing that's there, then you move into a very directive form of leadership where you're trying to fix people or give them the benefit of your wisdom. But at the fundamental level, now this comes the fourth century China, Chong Su said - and I think this is a great definition of a servant leadership. It just happens to be 2,400 years old. He said, "It is more a matter of believing the good than of seeing it as the fruit of our efforts." This is something again for you to consider. To what extent in the exercise of your own leadership are you trying to evoke, elicit, bring forth the good that you know is there? Because that's the great gift. That's the gift of... that Jesus certainly gave to us, that Mohammed gave to us, that great spiritual leaders give to us. The belief that we are good and that we can be responsible for our own healing. So much of what we do in organizations is completely counter to what I just defined as good leadership. So much of what we have defined as effective leadership in organizations is finding the program, the right training manual, the right technique and forcing people. We don't think we're forcing them, but we are. Forcing them to go through these. And it is such a dishonoring that what I notice everywhere is that people respond to it as the major that it is. "So you're telling me I have to be different? You're telling me I'm not smart enough to have created this myself? You're telling me I have to do this?" Greenleaf talked about people feeling freer and autonomous. These are natural conditions. We need to feel free. We need to feel free. To choose, to decide, to participate. We need you as leaders out there believing that there is good in us and that it's your task to figure out how do I bring it forth? I have myself been working with a definition of leadership which is right now, because people are so battered and bruised, and people feel so badly about themselves and people feel tired and so stressed and this is... Sometimes it's a terrifying time to realize the emotional and physical distress we're in as a culture right now. But I now see a leader, you, need to be the person who has more faith in people than they do in themselves. More faith in people's capacity than they do in themselves because people have lost their way. People have lost their sense of themselves. A great Tibetan teacher, Tran Paul Rein Po Shay said that "it is a dark time when people lack courage because they don't know who they are." And if we think that we are this depressed, stressed, paralyzed group of people, how on earth could we have the courage to change the world? Where would we find courage if we believed that we are such a bad group of people? So this is going back to what I was saying earlier for you as the leader to remember what you saw, the goodness that you saw in people that called you to be a servant. If you can remember that, now was the time now to raise up that vision of our goodness in your community and in your families, with your colleagues, with your employees. You are the one who must hold the vision of other people's goodness for them until they rediscover it. I feel that is also a critical need for leaders. Now, this is old stuff. I mean, we always knew that great teachers were those who saw more in us than we saw in our young selves, and I'm just saying that now the need for that is even stronger because people are so battered and bruised these days.

Now, while I've been really impressed by Greenleaf's spiritual depth, I think that that's the thing I was most impressed with last night, I realized

that he's talked about how spirit emanates from within. And for those of us leading organizations now or being in organizations trying to be leaders. When we don't know what the destination is, for me, the real work is to lead from within, but not just from within you. Not from your spirits but I realized last night that when an organization has a spirit, this is not about spirituality in work. When an organization knows its spirit, it can lead itself from within just as we can lead ourselves from within as servant leaders. So then I was in the question, which I've actually been in for many years now, is... well, what's the source of organizational spirit. I'm going to assume that the need is the same whether I'm speaking of one individual or 40,000 workers. What is it that gives an organization its spirit? And it's from that center place then, that centering place of spiritual richness and energy that an organization can navigate any future, just as at an individual level we can only navigate the chaos because we know who we are. There's a wonderful description of the president of the Flexor Institute, Robert Layman. Somebody on his board or staff described his leadership in this way. They said, "He doesn't know where we're going, but he knows how to get us there." That is a great description of leadership in these times. For me, the 'how to get us there' is to make sure that as an organization we have strong awareness, strong consciousness of self. Who are we? What are we trying to do? It's... the need is to develop not a clear map that we navigate on, not a strategic plan, not a new org chart. The real work is to return to the center where our spirit emanates from. (end of side one) ... more than that. We trivialized those terms. So I want at least the imagery to be similar to how we feel about our own spiritual centers. I want it to feel that allowed and that necessary. So it's not about writing the right vision statement. It's not about putting up a beautiful piece about our mission. It's about how do we be in conversation to evoke this rich place of spirit. How can we as an organization or community be together in conversations about why we're doing this work? How can we come together to dwell in the rich territory of meaning making? Now one of my longings in the past few years is that the desire to serve others is a natural impulse and that any time people in an organization are given the chance to dwell in this deep center of meaning, they always reach out. They don't move in. They reach out. They embrace more of the world. I believe the natural direction of life is out. Love is extending, not contracting. So the natural flow in our relationships in towards each other. It just we've really, in this culture, forced people to contract, to be fearful of one another. So if the natural direction is out, to embrace, to open, to bring in more, here's a few little examples of that. And you can think about this in your own experience, especially if you're in a for-profit institution where we think this impulse doesn't matter. We think that the people who work for corporations don't care about the whole because if they cared about the whole, they'd be like those of us in non-profits who are just bearing the brunt of society's problems. But I'm finding even in the strangest industries, that when people are given the chance to write a mission statement, to talk about the purpose of their work, they've taken the world.

So here's my most recent favorite story. I have lots of them; I'll tell you two. One is that at one point I said, "You know, even if you make dog food, you want it to mean something for humanity." And there was someone who made dog food in the room at the time. I didn't know that until he came up. But he said in one of their plants they had asked employees to write their own mission statement and it began with "pets contribute to human health." Okay? They took it immediately out into the world. Now, much more recent than that, is the learning I got from Hewlett Packard's Research and Development Division which was 800 people or so who several years ago now wanted to reformulate, reorganize themselves around a stirring, you know, sense of purpose. Their original sense of purpose was "We will be the best R&D facility in the world." That's a good American kind of 'we'll be number one.' They did a superb, a very participative process on describing something that took three years of really collecting people's stories and finding out what was the meaning of working at Hewlett Packard in research and development for 800 people and feeding that back to everybody. They did a lot of very creative things. But in the second year, there was a woman who stood up in one meeting and said, "I'm sorry. I just don't get charged up by becoming the best research facility in the world. But I could get a lot of energy if we were striving to become the best research facility for the world." Now, some people might have thought, "Well, isn't that cute." You know, or "Just like a woman." But here's what happened

next. Her words went to another employee's heart, and he was a graphic designer for Hewlett Packard. So he went back to his shop and he created just for himself, he created a poster that captured being the best R&D facility for the world. And in this poster, it's the original founding garage, you know, every computer company started in a garage. You know that. So it's a single structure and Hewlett and Packard are standing outside the garage looking in at their new baby, their new creation. But what's inside the garage is not a computer. What's inside the garage is the planet. And it's just luminous. Now, they had 50,000 requests for that poster in a company that doesn't have that many employees. This so resonated it didn't matter about class, race, gender. This resonated because we as human beings have a desire to serve. And this is an impulse I simply encourage you to trust is there. You are not the only ones who are trying to act from a sense of spirit that is emanating from within. Most people in your community or your organization want their work to be grounded from the same sense of call, from the same ground of energy, which is purpose, spirit, service. These are natural to human beings. You can trust that. It may take you a few months to discover it in certain people because we are very bruised, but you can trust that it is what called you is an impulse that is also calling people in every form of organization. It is what calls us together as a species or as a race.

Now there's just one other thing that I want to say. I'm just recently discovered something and it was from looking up some very ancient teachings and my own experience. And it's why I love Eudora Welty's little description so much. What I'm starting to notice is that in the midst of suffering, in the midst of terrifying circumstances, in the midst of modern organization when we actually find one other, when we see one other, when we notice the humanity - each other's wonder, each other's presence, each other's plight - when we actually see each other, the experience is always one of joy. The circumstances don't seem to matter. This is the most hopeful thing thought I've been in for a long time. The circumstances don't matter. The suffering isn't what's critical. It's that the suffering might us to see one another. And in the moment when we see one other, we have a profoundly human experience which is the experience of joyous recognition.

Now, what I have found hopeful about this, and I really hope I keep believing this, but what I have found hopeful about this that it has changed what I'm looking for in my work. I'm not looking to end the ills of the world. I am not believing that by anything I do, I can eliminate human suffering. I am not believing even that it's going to get better. But I realize that if I'm on the search to really find and see human beings, that I will have the experience of a lifetime, that I will feel blessed, independent of the circumstances, I will have seen you and in seeing you, I'm going to see the Sacred. I'm going to see the Divine and that is always an experience that is joyful. Now, if that is true, that the source that sustains us, the sustenance is finding each other, then this is where as leaders we really need to rethink what we're doing because it would take us from being fixed on activities to fix things to processes that bring us together. You're real work would be - I think it already is for many of you - to figure out how to bring people together and to trust them that they will find their own healing. But the work is first finding each other. There's a little snippet of a poem by William Stafford. He called this poem *A Ritual To Read To One Another*, and in it he starts it by saying:

If you don't know the kind of person I am and I don't know the kind of person you are, then a pattern that others made may prevail in the world. The pattern that others made may prevail in the world and following the wrong god home we may miss our star.

Okay. There are many patterns out there about leadership, about people, about motivation, about human development. There are many patterns out there. The essential pattern that I'm trying to discover right now... the essential pattern is that when we are together, more becomes possible. When we are together, joy is available. In the midst of a world that is insane, that will continue to surprise us with new outrages... in the midst of that future, the gift is each other. And we have lived with a pattern that has not told us that. We have lived with a pattern with a false god that has said, "We're in it for ourselves. It's a dog-eat-dog world out there. It's nature read in truth. It's nature read in tooth and claw. Only the strong survive and you can't trust anybody." That's the pattern that's operating in

most organizations if you scratch the surface. The pattern that called you to be a servant leader, the god, the "god you're following home" is actually the god of who we are as a species. We have need for each other. We have a desire for each other, and more and more I believe that if as Gary Snider said, "The real work is to stay together." We are not only the best resource to move into this future. I believe more and more we are the only resource.

Now, it's really interesting. This is my last Greenleaf thing I noticed last night. In his later work on religious leaders he changed the description of the consequences of servant leadership. He gave up the word 'autonomous' and talked about feeling at peace. That's very significant to me. It's not that we're trying to encourage people's autonomy, but when we work as servants to others, we actually in ourselves and in them, will feel more at peace. Because if anything that's peaceful for me signals that that's our natural state. So I think Greenleaf was really on to something there that I have also found strongly in my work. As we come together, as we come together, we are able to experience joy and even beyond joy we are able to experience peace. So we need to figure out how to be together. For me, that is the essential work.

I'm going to close by reading something that is in the book called *Stories Of God, An Unauthorized Biography* by John Shay. It's written in 1978. This is a description of our time and it's a description of I believe what our work needs to be. He wrote:

When we reach our limits, when our ordered worlds collapse, when we cannot enact our moral ideals, when we are disenchanted it is then that we often enter into the awareness of mystery. Our dwelling within mystery is both menacing and promising. A relationship with exceeding darkness and undeserved light. In this situation with this awareness we do a distinctively human thing: we gather together and tell stories of God. We tell stories of God to calm our terror and hold our hope on high.

And I believe with all my heart that it is up to us to hold this hope on high through the stories we are holding of one another. Ralph Nader said that the best way to control people is to lower their expectations. And I'm saying that it is time for us to raise our expectations to these new heights which Greenleaf so beautifully sought and you have already seen. And to realize that the real work is to follow the right god home, and that the right god home is in each other. So many blessings on your journey as we move into this time of peril and hope.

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