

CLOSING ADDRESS

We have been, this month, on a phenomenal trek -- a trek through space and time and relationships, in which (as journeys will) we've ended up not only in a different place from that in which we began, but also we've ended up as transformed people. I'd like to share with you a bit of T. S. Eliot, a British poet, to begin with, and then describe in ten brief statements the elements of this transformation.

T. S. Eliot is a Christian, but I think that when he uses "God" here, he speaks, as Gandhiji, in the song "Raghupati," of that which is final to all of us, whatever name we choose to use. As I look at you, transformed today, one can only be grateful.

"We praise Thee, O God, for Thy glory displayed in all the creatures of the earth,
In the snow, in the rain, in the wind, in the storm; in all of Thy creatures, both the hunters and the hunted.
For all things exist only as seen by Thee, only as known by Thee, all things exist
Only in Thy light, and Thy glory is declared even in that which denies Thee; the darkness declares the glory of light.
Those who deny Thee could not deny, if Thou didst not exist; and their denial is never complete, for if it were so, they would not exist.
They affirm Thee in living; all things affirm Thee in living; the bird in the air, both the hawk and the finch; the beast on the earth, both the wolf and the lamb; the worm in the soil and the worm in the belly.
Therefore man, whom Thou hast made to be conscious of Thee, must consciously praise Thee, in thought and in word and in deed.
Even with the hand to the broom, the back bent in laying the fire, the knee bent in cleaning the heart, we, the scrubbers and sweepers, The back bent under toil, the knee bent under sin, the hands to the face under fear, the head bent under grief,
Even in us the voices of seasons, the snuffle of winter, the song of spring, the drone of summer, the voices of beasts and of birds praise Thee.
We thank Thee for Thy mercies of blood, for Thy redemption by blood.
For the blood of Thy holy people
Shall enrich the earth, shall create the holy places.
For wherever a saint has dwelt, wherever a one has given his blood, There is holy ground, and the sanctity shall not depart from it
Though armies trample over it, though sightseers come with guide-books looking over it;
From where the western seas gnaw at the coast of Iona,
To the death in the desert, the prayer in forgotten places by the broken imperial column,
From such ground springs that which forever renews the earth

Though it is forever denied. Therefore, O God, we thank Thee
Who hast given such blessing.

Forgive us, O Lord, we acknowledge ourselves as type of the
common man,
Of the men and women who shut the door and sit by the fire;
Who fear the blessing of God, the loneliness of the night of
God, the surrender required, the deprivation inflicted;
Who fear the injustice of men less than the justice of God;
Who fear the hand at the window, the fire in the thatch, the
fist in the tavern, the push into the canal,
Less than we fear the love of God.
We acknowledge our trespass, our weakness, our fault; we
acknowledge
That the sin of the world is upon our heads; that the blood of
suffering and the agony of the saints
Is upon our heads.
Lord, have mercy upon us."

- 1) In a world in which one is prone to settle for mediocrity, we set out in our research to do practical social investigation with a random group of ordinary colleagues, and we encountered not ordinariness, but excellence: exemplars in our midst. This corporate excellence is the style required as we demand the emergence of the practical new mythology, they mythic heroes, of our time.
- 2) Then again, in a time besieged by overwhelming complexity and change, we set out through the team to unite our own complexity of backgrounds, visions, and gifts, and we encountered not unity but a new, invented commonness out of our particularity. This invented commonness is the style required as we demonstrate in the Houses the presence of a global people who care.
- 3) Then again, in a time in which all social forms are doomed to change, we set out to articulate the new strategic directions of the movement; and we encountered not diverse new strategy, but one prophetic consensus. This prophetic consensus is the style required as we strategize for the four million settlements.
- 4) Then again, in a time in which simple solutions are sought after, we set out to deal with the prophet, to be a people of declaration, and we encountered not ourselves declaring, but a series of bold moves which we declare. This strategic direction is the style required as we form the cadres and cores.
- 5) Then again, in a world which polarizes rich and poor, leisure and work, the symbolic and the practical, we set out to use the team structure not only for research, but also for practical enablement tasks, and we encountered beyond enablement, the rich corporateness which emerges in mundane tasks. This corporateness is the style required as we catalyze awakened/engaged communities.

6) Then again, in a world in which social structures have collapsed on all sides, we set out to care for ourselves (to care for the world) through the roundtables, and we encountered, beyond care of ourselves, the team, the social tool of catalysis. This tool is the style required as we work to expand the vision of social structures across society.

7) Then again, in a time in which participation in decision-making occurs in violent disorder, we set out in the assembly plenaries to bridge our diversities with methods of corporate decision-making, and we encountered not only decision-making, but profound common trust, common confidence in which individuals were released and the assembly as a whole empowered. This corporate trust is the style required as we create conciliar polities across the regions, areas and continents.

8) Then again, in a world in which the breaklooses in the roles of the Third World, of minority peoples, of the women, youth and countless other groups, we set out to clarify the roles of this Order which we are, and we encountered not structural clarity, but the presence of the Movemental Order, disciplined and already engaged shoulder-to-shoulder. This covenantal discipline is the style required as we devise methods of spirit sustenance for our times.

9) Then again, in a world which is plagued with anxiety and doubt about the future, we set out to use distancing as a method of gaining detachment on our work, and we encountered not detachment, but an explosion of passionate engagement, of faith in the future. This passion, this faith, is the style required as we recreate for a new era the training tools such as the spiral curriculum which the world needs.

10) And finally, in a world which is despairing over the accelerated collapse of its temporal hopes, we set out in July hoping in particular plans, projects, proposals and people, and we encountered not their success, but the victory of One People engaged beyond their hopes, indeed beyond their wildest dreams, in radically local community care. This passionate engagement beyond the death of our hopes is the style required as we move toward massive movemental formation.

And so I am honored and delighted at the close of this Research Assembly, to send us onward in the journey, to celebrate, and to stand faithful to the transformation which we have encountered. These are indeed the times, and we unquestionably the people.

