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Moments *of* ruth

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A PLACE TO HEAL...A SPACE TO GROW



Moments with Mary

Spiritual Leadership

(excerpt from “Spiritual Leaders Make Careful Choices,” a speech delivered at the United Centers for Spiritual Living—2007 Annual Community Gathering: Answering the Call through Spiritual Living on March 2, 2007)

by The Rev. Dr. Mary A. Tumpkin

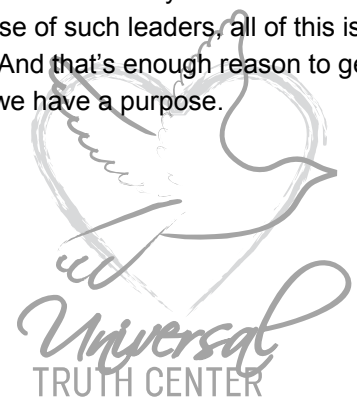
There is great discussion in leadership circles as to whether leaders are born or made. But there is really no discussion necessary—all leaders are born. The more accurate question is, “Do certain people have specific traits that qualify them as natural leaders?” John Maxwell, a 20 - 21st century leadership guru, breaks down the types of leadership into three categories: 1) great leaders who are born with certain traits; 2) good leaders who are not born with the traits but have the discipline to develop them; and 3) latent leaders who have not even seen leadership modeled. He emphasizes that not only are the natural traits important, but the training, the exposure to an effective leadership model, and most of all, the desire to be a leader are all important factors in molding a leader.

Despite popular opinion, there is nothing wrong with wanting to be a leader, as long as we do not think that leadership is position or title. Leadership is about influence, and it should never be used for selfish gain. But in order to be an effective leader, one must have the ability to assemble and motivate people. The old saying goes that if you think you are a leader and no one is following, then you are merely out taking a walk! The influence exercised by a leader is based on the relationship between the leader and those who are following. People look to spiritual leaders in particular as the models for whatever it is that we represent. And most people hold spiritual leadership in especially high esteem. More than other types of leaders, spiritual leaders must exemplify the message we espouse. How we gain the influence with others and what we do with it once it is attained is paramount. Influence is not to be gained by coercion or force, neither of which is in accordance with truth principles. Neither should charm and persuasiveness be the primary qualities

exhibited by a spiritual leader. Spiritual leaders must not only be competent and have the ability to provide a sense of direction for the organizations we lead: we must be dedicated students of truth ourselves. In the pursuit of our goals, the end does not justify the means; we must start out with the right intentions, and both the means and the end must agree in order for true integrity to be established.

The ultimate goal for spiritual leaders should be to encourage and empower people to develop their potential and become the spiritual beings that they were created to be. And as our position of leadership is elevated, our individual character must also rise to support it.

We need spiritual leaders who are willing to model a message that empowers and blesses people. We need leaders with different shapes, heights, and colors, who are able to share a message of significance with others. In a world torn apart by war, ravaged by hunger, and corrupted by crime, we need people who will stand and offer hope, and keep it alive in the darkest times—people who will continue to talk about the light when it seems they are going through an endless tunnel. Who speak of possibilities when “impossible” has become a catch-all. We need leaders who are committed, but whose commitment does not keep them from learning to laugh at themselves and enjoy life. We need leaders who are bold enough to stand and say, “Yes, this earth can be the kingdom of God, where people love and respect each other and live in harmony and make the desert bloom!” And yes, because of such leaders, all of this is possible in our lifetime. And that’s enough reason to get up in the morning—knowing we have a purpose.





Reflections from the Editor

If we have the Word, let us say it

If we have the Word, let us be it

If we have the Word, let us DO.

--Mari Evans

Mari Evans, a poet, dramatist, fiction writer, essayist, and lecturer, is one of my favorite writers. I appreciate her primarily because, even in the midst of the politically correct world of academia, she speaks Truth boldly and unapologetically. She epitomizes what Alice Walker (my all-time favorite writer) defines as a womanist philosophy for universal wholeness. In the above quote, she issues a call to action that, in my opinion, is particularly relevant to students of New Thought.

I believe that we are in need of a New Thought call to action. This idea surfaced for me last fall, when I allowed myself the luxury of a retreat with two of my sister-friends, both of whom are passionate, AME ordained writer-scholar-activists. We almost reluctantly broke from our hectic schedules in Houston, Miami, and Chicago, and met up in Atlanta. From there, we drove about an hour outside of the city to the creek-side cabin in the woods that we had rented. We stocked the pantry with the comfort food and special occasion treats that our more disciplined alter-egos do not indulge in at home; then we settled in for three blissful days of meditation, writing, and stimulating conversation. Any reservations we had about taking the time off to get together went out the window!

One of our early-morning dialogues turned to the topic of religion. We shared our various challenges, personal revelations, and reflections on the role of religion in society. I was pleasantly surprised by how much they knew about New Thought. I wasn't prepared, however, to hear one of them articulate the concern that had been gnawing at me for quite some time. What she said was: "I'm intrigued by the New Thought movement. I think it has a lot of good qualities. But I can't get behind it because I have not yet seen anything about a New Thought ethic of service. Have you?"

I had not. Admittedly, I still have a whole lot of studying to do, but it has crossed my mind on a number of

occasions that our tradition is weighted heavily toward individual introspection and fulfillment, often referred to by critics as "navel-gazing." While this is a necessary first step for any metaphysician, I believe that there must come a time when we expand our focus and our efforts toward collective spiritual enlightenment and tangible empowerment for all humanity. And I believe that this calling outranks our personal and institutional goals. The achievement of such lofty aspirations requires committed, selfless action. But isn't that what constitutes a movement?

I'm also concerned about the weight of the responsibility that those of us who have benefited from the lessons we've learned are content to deposit upon the shoulders of our leadership. Service is not solely the obligation of our ministers and teachers in New Thought. They cast the vision and give us the tools to make it manifest. But they alone cannot sustain the movement. As students of Truth, we all have been empowered to lead in some capacity. We all have roles to play. And we all have a stake in the demonstration of the message of Jesus the Christ as we understand it. If we are serious about bringing forth the Kingdom—living the Divine perfect life that God intends for humankind, each one of us must be and DO as we say we believe. By our positive example, not our words alone, we radiate the good news of God's infinite, indwelling presence and power.

So—are you ready to serve?

In Peace and Love,

Tawnicia F. Rowan
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Techniques of Spiritual Healing

by The Rev. Dr. Mary A. Tumpkin

A secret of healing from biblical times is that whatever you affix to God's name, "I AM," manifests in your life. The association can be conscious, unconscious, positive, or negative. If you affirm, "I AM sick!" or "I AM inheriting this from my mother!" what do you suppose is obliged to occur?

...Freedom to choose what you want to say and do is yours unconditionally. You may use this power to identify yourself with all that is divine, spiritual, wise, holy, loving, and infinite. You are also free to identify with the illusions of pain, disease, affliction, lack, and limitation.

--Johnnie Coleman, Open Your Mind and Be Healed

The Rev. Dr. Johnnie Coleman, Founder of Christ Universal Temple in Chicago, Illinois and the Universal Foundation for Better Living, Inc. is my spiritual mother. In the course of her 50-year ministry, she has introduced thousands of devout seekers, including me, to the principles of New Thought Christianity. She has taught us that we can heal our minds and every undesirable outward manifestation in our lives by identifying, then correcting our error thoughts and beliefs. Anyone who is truly desirous of wholeness can abolish all appearances of physical disease through the disciplined application of various techniques of spiritual healing.

Spiritual healing is a cornerstone of the New Thought movement, so when the Rev. Coleman faced what her doctor described as an "incurable" physical challenge, she set out to learn the principles espoused by the Unity School of Christianity. Following her healing, she decided to teach as many other people as she could how to bring about the same results in their own lives. Today, my ministry is a product and an instrument of that mission. At the Universal Truth Center, we believe that perfect health is within the reach of every individual, and that it can be called forth into being by experienced faith. We facilitate healing by seeing beyond outer appearances to recognize each individual as perfect, whole, and complete.

On August 17-18, 2007, the Universal Truth Center will host a Techniques of Spiritual Healing Symposium. We have invited our friends in academia and from various traditions within the New Thought movement to come together for a spiritual healing service and dialogue about the barriers to and best practices for reclaiming emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being. The techniques that we explore will open the doorway to a new way of experiencing the fullness of God. You, too, are welcome to join us for what we are certain will be a life-altering encounter.

- Are you tired of wrestling with appearances of lack and limitation?
- Do you want to be whole in every area of your life, world, and affairs?
- Can you envision claiming your divine birthright of perfect health and prosperity?

If your answer is "yes," contact us today for conference times and registration information.

Call Darnetia Parrott at 305-624-4991, or visit our website at <http://www.utruthcenter.org>. All conference sessions will take place at the Universal Truth Center, 21310 NW 37th Avenue, Miami Gardens, FL, 33056.

*God is my help in every need,
God does my every hunger feed.
God walks beside me, guides my way,
Through every moment of the day.*

*I now am wise, I now am true.
Patient, kind, and loving too.
All things I am, can do, and be,
Through Christ, the Truth, that is in me.*

*God is my health, I can't be sick.
God is my strength, unailing, quick.
God is my all, I know no fear,
Since God and Love and Truth are here.*

--Hannah More Kohaus, Prayer of Faith

UTC News

Universal Truth Center 25th Anniversary (1982 - 2007)

Schedule of Events

Event: "Coming Out for Christ," Instructional Classes

Dates: Begins August 12, 2007, to continue each Sunday morning for 12 weeks

Time: 7 – 8 AM

Event: Healing Symposium, "Techniques of Spiritual Healing"

Featuring Dr. Sorah Dubitsky, Miami, FL (FIU Center for the Study of Spirituality); the Rev. Ellen Grace O'Brian, San Jose, CA (Kriya Yoga Tradition); the Rev. Coco Stewart, Los Angeles, CA (Religious Science); the Rev. Leddy Hammock, Clearwater, FL (Unity); the Rev. Chris Bazemore, Baltimore, MD (Divine Science); the Rev. Dr. Sheila McKeithen, Kingston, JA (Universal Foundation for Better Living) Lorenzo Rodriguez, Miami, FL (Religious Science)

Moderator: The Rev. Dr. Mary A. Tumpkin

Dates: August 17 – 18, 2007

Time: August 17, 7:00 – 9:00 pm; August 18, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Event: Women's Retreat – Martha's Vineyard

Dates: October 11 – 15, 2007

Event: "Coming Out for Christ," Consecration Ceremony

Date: November 9, 2007

Time: 7:00 pm

Culminating Event: 25th Anniversary Gala

Date: Saturday, November 10, 2007

Time: 7:00 pm – 12 midnight

More News!

Looking for spiritually enlightening, socially conscious dialogue and recreation? Check out the exciting activities sponsored by the Center for the Study of Spirituality, at Florida International University. For a complete calendar of events, please visit:

<http://cas.fiu.edu/SpiritualityCenter/lectureseries.htm>.

Do you have food for thought or exciting news to share? Would you like to announce an upcoming event? If so, be sure to get it in print! Contact the *Moments of Truth* editor for submission guidelines.

Using Truth: Special Feature

The world needs leaders...

Who use their influence at the right times for the right reasons;

Who take a little greater share of the blame and a little smaller share of the credit;

Who lead themselves successfully before attempting to lead others;

Who continue to search for the best answer, not the familiar one;

Who add value to the people and organization they lead;

Who work for the benefit of others and not for personal gain;

Who handle themselves with their heads and handle others with their hearts;

Who know the way, go the way, and show the way;

Who inspire and motivate rather than intimidate and manipulate;

Who live with people to know their problems and live with God in order to solve them;

Using Truth: Special Feature

Who realize that their dispositions are more important than their positions;

Who mold opinions instead of following opinion polls;

Who understand that an institution is the reflection of their character;

Who never place themselves above others except in carrying responsibilities;

Who will be as honest in small things as in great things;

Who discipline themselves so they will not be disciplined by others;

Who encounter setbacks and turn them into comebacks;

Who follow a moral compass that points in the right direction regardless of the trends.

--John C. Maxwell, from the "Epilogue" of *Developing the Leader Within You* (Nashville: Nelson Business, 1993)