

GLOBAL WISDOM COUNCIL

March 29, 2020

Brothers around the world,

Honoring our Council practices, we write to you from the heart and we will be lean of speech!

Twelve men from seven countries hosting work inspired by Richard Rohr's teaching and M.A.L.Es, have formed a Global Wisdom Council which aims to weave together our common aspirations to re-ground masculine practice to truly serve our times. We met, virtually, on March 23, 2020.

At this writing, March 29, 2020, Coronavirus is affecting 199 countries and territories, with 721,000 cases and 34,000 deaths. Earlier this week, India, with 1.3 billion people, imposed a national lockdown.

We are living in between the end of one age and the beginning of a new one: a truly global liminal space and time. Just as Council seeks not the final word, but rather to offer active and honest witness, we share these humble reflections with you as encouragement.

Our world will never be the same again. We live and experience pain, anger, fear, uncertainty, loss. We grieve that loss. People are nervous as they wait for a "tsunami."

At the same time, we witness silence on the streets, no airplanes in the sky, and these form new experiences in our lifetimes. We hear reports of waterways clearing and air pollution declining.

Does the quiet that many of us experience now allow us to rethink what is really necessary? Are we able to learn living moment to moment?

This pandemic is a global crisis. We don't have the chance to decide if we want to be part of it or not. So, let us welcome it. Let us actively live into this global liminal space, as difficult as it may be. Our shared work in initiation has introduced us to the blessing, miraculous healing, and transformation that liminal space has already granted us. Remember: "Your life is not about you"!

Isn't it disastrous to consider halting or even reversing a birthing labor once it has initiated? In the same way, odd as it may sound for us as men, we may be called to serve alongside women as midwives to help birth the new reality emerging for our planet.

Do we really have a choice? When, if not now, are we forced to re-focus, to re-evaluate our way of living, the way our economy works, the way we

perceive (and use) nature? When, if not now, do we have the chance to change our minds and then change our practices? Times like these call on us to dance not only our "survival dance" but also to try a new "sacred dance." Should we really wait until the end of our lives to regret in a way like: "I wish I had the courage to..."?

Let's share our vulnerability as one of our greatest gifts. Vulnerability engenders trust. Global trust is what we need and it can form the indestructible foundation for a new way of being with each other. Trust will lead to a new economy, not an extractive economy leading to death, but a reciprocal economy enhancing life for all of humanity in full embrace with the more than human world. And remember, change happens at the speed of trust.

We recommit to our five touchstones of Centering, Gathering (by practicing physical distancing), Connecting, Releasing, Serving. These give rise to wellsprings of compassion-in-action appropriate to the imperatives of these times.

Let us not turn this time of necessary "physical distancing" into social distancing. On the contrary, we need community and connection now more than ever! Please share practical ways to connect with other brothers. Here is one initiative: <http://virtualcouncil.org>. Men from many countries are connecting through Virtual Councils.

We are immensely grateful for our bonds of our shared brotherhood. We echo the wonderful words which poet David Whyte wrote in 1996, ironically, at the same time that Richard Rohr and Stephen Gambill offered the first Men's Rites of Passage!

Loaves and Fishes

This is not
the age of information.

This is the time of loaves
and fishes.

This is not
the age of information.

People are hungry
and one good word is bread
for a thousand.

Forget the news,
and the radio,
and the blurred screen.

~ David Whyte

Global Wisdom Council
Men as Learners and Elders (M.A.L.Es)
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