



Unity Church of Christianity  
Ten Year Anniversary of 9/11  
September 11, 2011

### **Howard Caesar**

As you all know there is a conversation or a series of conversations going on around this nation in memory of the ten year anniversary of 9/11, honoring those who lost their lives and recognizing that our whole nation was really affected by that. Now all across the nation in churches, synagogues and spiritual gatherings the topic today in some way is related to the tenth anniversary of 9/11. Although there has been lots and lots of focus on it for the past two or more weeks and perhaps some of you may be ready to move on, I think it would be inappropriate for us not to address the impact that it had and to remember those who died and to reflect on what it is that we can learn. There is something that we can learn from every experience and that's something we teach here.

The newspapers have been filled with articles and stories. The internet has been filled with the same. Television and radio stations have carried programs, specials and documentaries. There have been interviews with survivors who were in the building and were fortunate enough to

**Unity Church of Christianity**  
**Ten Year Anniversary of 9/11**  
**September 11, 2011**  
**Page 2**

make it out. They have told amazing stories of how they made their way and some of the heroes that were involved. There have been interviews with the family members and spouses of those who did not make it out. They have shared stories about cell phone calls and the last words spoken to their loved ones. I learned there were 101 pregnant women widowed through that event.

Unfortunately, there are tragedies that happen in life and they seize a moment in time forever burned in our memory. There are perhaps a few here who might specifically remember where they were and what they were doing when Pearl Harbor was bombed at the beginning of World War II.

There are those here, including myself, who know exactly where they were, what was happening and what was going on in their lives when they first learned of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. I believe most everyone here has fixed in memory the moment in time when learning of the first airplane that crashed into the World Trade Center. I certainly remember exactly where I was and precisely what I was doing.

Many people will remember details of a major tragic event that happens in their lives. I recall the specifics of exactly where I was and what I was doing when I received a call some years back. My youngest daughter Star had been in a serious automobile accident and was being life-flighted to the hospital. I remember precisely where I was and what was going on and what I felt.

These kinds of tragic things and crises can strike an individual or family all across the nation on any given day. The uniqueness of what we are dealing with today is an experience that impacted the entire nation. All of us went through this together as a family and all of us remember how it impacted us.

One thing that has been brought out is that there is always something good. There is always something good that can be found in anything we experience, any event that we go through if one is willing to be open and willing to notice. We're not saying it was good. We're just saying there is something to be learned or something that can be gained from it, an awareness, a realization.

Amidst the many newspaper columns and articles, there was one that I saw in *USA Today* on Wednesday. It was an article by the former Mayor of New York, Rudy Giuliani, and in recalling the events of 9/11, he said it was the worst day of his life and the best day. He said, "It was the worst day because of the incomprehensible death, destruction and evil." He said, "September 11 was also the best day because it put on display the very finest human instincts, compassion, courage, kindness and selflessness."

There were the first responders who rushed in to this life threatening emergency. They risked their lives and many lost their lives in trying to help others. There were neighbors helping neighbors. There were strangers helping strangers. There was help and aid being poured out from around the nation and around the world.

In another article, columnist Cal Thomas who was in New York just weeks after the event said there was a spirit of cooperation in New York like he had never seen before. He had visited New York on numerous occasions previously. He said, "Cab drivers didn't honk. Strangers spoke kindly to one another and civility reigned."

This same article pointed out there was this glorious period of solidarity in which even the bodied politic came together in a short period of uniting. In this article, Cal Thomas remembered members of Congress standing on the Capitol steps singling God Bless America, and he said, "Republicans and Democrats, Liberals and Conservatives, men and women, blacks, whites, Hispanics joined in one voice. It was a powerful thing." Then he added in his article, "How likely are we to see a day like that again?"

Hopefully it doesn't take a tragedy for us to be who we really are and to allow our light to truly shine. Perhaps no other time in history has the emotion of compassion been felt so universally in an entire nation and throughout the world. Americans who were in other countries witnessed what was happening there and experienced the pouring out of heart and compassion wherever they found themselves to be.

I think one of the reasons the whole world came together is that technology has advanced to the point where those images were immediately available around the world. People saw the horror of what was happening and they opened their hearts. They felt connected because on some level we all know we're a family. On some level we all know that we're brothers and sisters of one God. We may not always demonstrate that in our behaviors and our choices but that is the truth.

Over and over people talked about how this event drew us all closer and how it made us more united. Our love for freedom and oneness just expanded and grew. This whole thing gave us strength that Guiliانا himself said, "Surprised ourselves." I personally believe that the whole world came together in a way that it had never before in a collective body.

There was so much compassion felt the world over at that moment. If you could measure the energies and the frequencies and vibrations of that which surrounded the planet at that time it was heartfelt. Hearts connect people together. It was compassion, and compassion is a form of love, and love is a powerful thing.

A big question to ask ourselves is whether we can hold tightly to our spiritual ideals and spiritual principles when tragedies like this happen that would cause us to jump into fear or anger or possibly revenge. How tight is our hold on love, unity and oneness?

There was another article I came across and was touched by. I don't know if any of you saw it? It was an article about a woman named Andrea Reiner. She is now 50 years old. She is a Methodist minister. She was a Methodist minister at the time the event occurred. She is from Rye, New York. She was serving as a chaplain at Ground Zero after the 9/11 event took place. She shared in her article that she had severe health problems afterward. She had a miscarriage. She was diagnosed with breast cancer, and she couldn't help but wonder if some of that had to do with the recovery-site toxins that she spent some weeks in, but she had no regrets.

What happened was right after the attacks she was assigned or stationed at the morgue which was a temporary trailer set up at the sight of where the World Trade Center had stood. Workers sifted through debris looking for remains of the nearly 3000 people who died. She was there when they would deliver the body bags. She would then give blessings. They would bring them into the trailer. She says, "What happened in that little trailer, once the remains were brought in, was so full of reverence. It was so profound." Before she gave the blessing the workers who brought the remains would take off their hard hats and there was a sacred silence that filled the trailer. She said her blessing was a simple one. She said, "We didn't know if the person was Jewish or Christian or Buddhist or Muslim, and so I asked for the spirit of that person to find comfort and for the family of that person to find strength. It was a simple blessing."

Sometimes she would leave the trailer and walk through the debris amongst the workers. There were people who needed to talk, even the workers, and she would be a help in that way. One day when the workers found what was believed to be the remains of one of the hijackers, the body was brought to her. She asked that worker "was the body desecrated in any way when you found it? Was it spat upon? Was it treated in any disrespectful way?" What he answered with brought tears to her. What he said was "these remains were treated with the same respect as all other remains, after all this is still someone's son." This man held tightly to his spiritual principles, his spiritual ideals at a time when he or anyone could easily have gone to anger, bitterness, revenge, disrespect.

This Methodist chaplain, this lady Andrea Reiner concludes her article by saying, "What this tenth anniversary needs to convey is the human capacity for courage and hope." Courage and hope, boy how good is that? She says, "Don't keep replaying the images of the jets and the flames. Remember the care and dignity with which the human remains were treated at Ground

Zero. The workers there stood with dignity and reverence for all life. We can always find hope knowing we did that in the face of sheer insanity.”

You see there are a lot of things that we face in this world that seem insane and somebody has to bring sanity to it. Somebody has to bring centeredness to it. Somebody has to live from the truth, not live from the reaction to a horror.

Jesus said, “Be in the world but not of it.” He said, “In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world. I have shown the way. I have modeled for you a way to be in the world and you are called to that way.” He said, “Follow me,” and when he said, “Follow me,” he was saying, “Follow me into this way of life.”

These energies and frequencies and vibrations of love and understanding and peace and acceptance, I don’t care what happens out there externally, that’s who are you and that’s who you have to be. That’s who you are even when others are not. Be in the world but not of it.

To be in the world when manifestations occur, we are called to rise above darkness, separation and conflict. We are to be above that. We are asked to be a light. He said, “Be a light and don’t cover it over.” I don’t care what’s happening in the world, don’t cover it over. Don’t put a bushel over it. Be a light, that’s why you’re here. That’s why you’re on the planet. That’s what you’re here to learn. That’s what this life is about.

Spiritual integrity in the purest sense is being able to remain steadfast to the spiritual principles of love and oneness and to hold to that love and oneness even when there are evidences and manifestations and happenings out there that want to erode it. Will we allow it to be eroded? Who we truly are at the core?

You see love always unites. Love unites, love harmonizes, love inspires, and love binds and bonds together as one for the good of all. That’s what love does. It is a frequency of cooperation and out of that frequency comes solutions, answers, and a direction always.

The opposite is fear which separates and divides. It promotes conflict, selfish interests, and a frequency that essentially blocks solutions and answers. You could look to a recent happening at Congress relative to the debt ceiling. Not to place blame on any one side, simply to say that the dominant energy frequency there was certainly not one of love or cooperation or a coming together.

We have some things to learn. There are solutions that will only be realized when we open our hearts and get to a place of love. Otherwise, we’re blocking solutions and answers.

Oneness implies that all things are interrelated. Every one of us has a connection to each other. Every one of us has a connection to the Mother Earth that we live on. Every one of us has a connection to the universe. Every one of us has a connection to our one God, the one same true God.

This one force is a force for good. If we cooperate with it, and if we apply and integrate the principles and laws that are associated with this force for good, it brings to us a spirituality that will assist us in bringing an element of Heaven to Earth. Bringing Heaven to Earth, heavenly frequencies, heavenly vibrations, heavenly nature of love and oneness that's what it's about.

No matter what happens in the world around us what remains most important is what happens within us. Who are we in each moment in time? In spite of what may happen in the world our challenge is to make the world a better place because we were here. That means we have to rise above the things that are of the world as Jesus said and so we do as Jesus suggested. We seek to be a light that shines into all the dark places of the world.

Wherever you find darkness you bring the light. That's our job and it requires the application of spiritual principles that allow us to grow. We are here to grow spiritually, to expand and broaden our consciousness and our awareness that our family is far greater than those who are housed inside the doors of our home. A lot of people haven't awakened to that and they don't have that makeup within them.

It's been said that you don't go to Heaven, you grow to Heaven. You have to be growing and evolving spiritually. You will begin to experience windows of Heaven within, a feeling of connectedness of the beauty of life, the beauty of the soul, knowing the reality and the truth of people around you; holding and knowing the ideal, having a vision of what is possible, to dream what you know exists. Somewhere in this universe it exists or you wouldn't have those who are holding its possibility and that's for all of us to join together in it.

I've read about the life of Anwar Sadat and the tremendous transformation that occurred in his life. He said, "In the power to change yourself is the power to change the world around you."

Marianne Williamson a friend of ours who has spoken here says wonderful things. She says, "Personal transformation can and does have global affects. As we go so goes the world for the world is us." We interact. We affect one another. It ripples on out.

The more inner work we do the more we become a light in the world, the more we become a blessing and a contribution to transforming the world. On this matter of inner work, there's a

story that appeared in *Guideposts* told by the wife of Tom Burnett who was one of the passengers on United Airlines Flight 93. This is the flight high jacked by terrorists intending to fly to Washington D.C., possibly aiming for the White House.

Tom managed to call his wife several times while he was on that plane. His last call was to tell his wife that he and some of the other passengers were now going to try to take control back of the airplane from the hijackers. Thanks to their bravery, the plane didn't reach its intended target instead it crashed in a rural field in Pennsylvania and all aboard died.

She said there was a ray of light that cut through the darkness of that day for her. It had to do with what went on in the months leading up to 9/11. She said that Tom would usually come home to have lunch with her on the days he wasn't traveling. He had been in town for several weeks and finally asked his wife one day if she had noticed that he wasn't coming home for lunch when he was in town. She wondered what he was doing, and he said, "What I've been doing everyday is going to noon mass at a church near my office."

Tom was a religious guy, but he wasn't that religious as his wife knew him to be. There was nothing as devoted that had gone on within him. He wasn't one who talked about religion or spirituality. It wasn't a topic for him.

His wife Deena asked him, "Why?" Why he was doing this? Let me share with you how the conversation went as told by Deena. She asks why and Tom paused and said, "I don't know how else to say this. I feel like God is trying to tell me something. Maybe if I go to church everyday I'll be able to hear it better." Now I was really surprised. Tom never talked like this. "What do you think it is?" I asked. "I don't know," he said, "I have some sense that it's going to affect a lot of people and well this is the weird part, I think it might even involve the White House somehow." I had no idea what to make of this, neither did Tom. Still he kept attending mass daily. He prayed more often and more openly, and we talked a lot about his growing relationship with God. Tom never grew anymore certain about the message being sent to him but that didn't matter. What mattered was the wonderful closeness with God he experienced, a closeness that he shared with me. That's why even as the events of September 11 were unfolding, I had no doubt the source of Tom's courage aboard Flight 93 that day, and I believe his experience offers a ray of light that shines through my darkness, a light that shines through my life even now and forever.

The greatest work we all can do is to develop the Christ light within our soul. It is our work to uncover the truth of who we are, to project the light into the darkness of ignorance that we find in various places in the world. Each of us has been called. This is our moment. This is our time.

**Unity Church of Christianity**  
**Ten Year Anniversary of 9/11**  
**September 11, 2011**  
**Page 8**

This is what we are to be about as Marianne Williamson says, “What goes on in us does have global effects. We’re all connected.”

On the internet this morning when I brought it on up the big headline was “Back to Ground Zero.” I don’t want to go back to Ground Zero. I want to move beyond a zero. I want to go higher and I invite you to go. Yes, we must honor these people as we have done but let us not become stuck in the barrage of images that we have received as nation over and over and over again. I hope this does not take us away from the love and the oneness that we are intended to be as spiritual beings. Disaster and horror is not the frequency we want to dial up. This is the time to begin projecting positive images. The people without vision perish, as the Bible states, so our vision must take us forward.

John Lennon wrote a song that captured the hearts of millions of people because it spoke to people at a deep soul level and others embraced and felt the same things that he said within that song. It was a call to action and the call to action was to imagine, just to imagine. The song is called Imagine. He asks us to dream, to vision, to imagine. He asks us to imagine all people living life in peace. Can you imagine all people living life in peace? He says, “You may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one. I hope someday you’ll join us and the world will live as one.” Well I hope that day is today and that you will join me in helping the world to live as one.

I close today with a prayer, a universal greeting by Gandhi. I used images and hand movements to share this. It goes like this, “I offer you peace. I offer you love. I offer you friendship. I see your beauty. I hear your needs. I feel your feelings. My wisdom flows from the higher source. I salute the source in you. Let us work together for unity and love.” God bless you all.