



REFLECTIONS ON SERVANT-LEADERSHIP AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

Interview with John Noble and Ralph Lewis

— LARRY C. SPEARS

[John Noble and Ralph Lewis co-founded the Greenleaf Centre-United Kingdom in 1997. Both Ralph and John have a passion for developing servant-leaders and a strong belief in its potential for benefiting organizational life. For most of those years, John Noble served as director and Ralph Lewis served as board chair of Greenleaf-U.K. In November 2019, I sat down with them and conducted the following interview to capture their thoughts on servant-leadership, and their role in encouraging others in the U.K. and beyond, over the past 25 years. —Larry Spears]

Larry: What were the markers in your life, the people or events that helped shape your thinking? Can you name a few?

Ralph: There are an awful lot of them. I think the main thing was growing up in Uganda. I was the son of an English father. My mother was a Polish refugee and was treated rudely by the English colonialists even though she could speak five languages and was incredibly intelligent. That gave me a very strong feeling of being on the side of the underdog and also resentment against those who treated other people badly-- for whatever reason. And then when I



came to England which I did when I was 12; it was a whole new world. I think I mostly was surprised by the lack of community in England. I realized that community is so important.

John: Well, I think firstly my father, although he might be surprised to hear me say that! But he was a quiet influence in my life. Although we didn't always see eye to eye on things, he was an example to which I always aspired in many ways. Beyond that, my family, initially my late father-in-law, who was an extremely wise man, one could say truly religious. He was a wonderfully warm, open, inquiring man, always wanted to know how you were and what was informing your thinking. And then I have to say my wife who in many ways is the best example of a servant-leader I've ever met. And my daughter, too. So, the main influencers to begin with were close family members. Then beyond that, when I began to read more and listen to more people, I would have to say Jim Autry and Meg Wheatley and their presentations and writings helped give me a new language in which to express my own beliefs in servant-leadership, both for completely different reasons, but Jim Autry and Meg Wheatley. Lots of others that I heard at the conferences, too, but those are the two that stand out, and who I always quote. And the one book I always recommend would be *The Servant Leader* by James Autry.

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Larry: Can you say a bit more about what the completely different reasons are?



John: It comes back to the two interviews that you and I did with them for publication some twenty years ago, where Jim was precise and focused and brief in his answers, not to say they weren't imaginative, but they were clear and brief and took very little transposing. You know what I mean? Whereas Meg was more kind of all over the map; ideas sort of flowed like water and just suddenly appeared, and then they disappeared and then came back again. And so, it was Jim's precision and the excitement of listening to Meg Wheatley – her train of thought as it just flowed; it has always been inspiring. And then the other event was the first Greenleaf Center conference in 1995 that I attended. I'd had a rotten journey, and finished up in Pittsburgh, where I shouldn't have been. By the time I got to the conference, there was only enough time to change clothes and come down to hear the opening - and it was Jim Autry. And that just changed my life, because I was going through some challenges at work and I felt I was a lone voice, and here was Jim Autry essentially saying, "John, you're okay. You know, what you're thinking is fine." And I think that was the most memorable of any presentation. And I've heard wonderful presentations since, but that one sticks out as just very special, very special to me. I would never find a way to thank Jim enough for it. I have tried, but I never quite managed it.

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Larry: Ralph, what was your educational background?

Ralph: I did a physics degree. I suppose it was a good decision at the time. I'm good at mathematics, which I loved and it's an easy language for me. I'm not quite sure about the actual physics, but I can tell you how many molecules on average we're inhaling from



Julius Caesar's last breath, which is about 40. And also, by Schrodinger's wave equation it's quite possible for a ten-ton lorry to materialize from one side of the wall and reappear on the other side. So, physics at least give me an appreciation that the world is not what we think it is. And then, after working as an electronic engineer systems analyst, I went back to Uganda as a volunteer teacher teaching math. I knew I wanted to teach but not in the English school system. And I ended up doing a Masters in leadership by research. I actually proved (and I couldn't do it today) using analysis of covariance on timelines that training shoe shop sales assistants to be nice to customers sold on average four or five pairs of shoes more per week than the branches where they hadn't had the training. And then after that I got a job as a lecturer at Cranfield School of Management. And I've been in leadership development ever since.

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Larry: Are there two or three books on servant-leadership that have had an impact on you?

Ralph: Well, Larry, one of the most impactful was your first book, *Reflections on Leadership* (1995). I did a book review for John Wiley & Sons, and they said "Do you want some money, or would you like to choose a book?" And I had never even heard of Greenleaf, so I chose your book. And I just remember reading it, and it really was one of those moments when you go (and this is a big compliment, by the way; it may not sound like it but it is) "This is so obvious!" This is what we should be. Everyone should know. And it was a revelation and I just felt immediately at home with the writings—it was speaking a language that I thought something



everyone should be able to understand. And that's when I said "it's obvious" I mean that as a really, really great compliment.

Larry: I don't recall your saying that before--that *Reflections on Leadership* was so impactful for you.

Ralph: It was! It was the absolute turning point! Then I think I got in touch with you and you put me in touch with John Noble, and then I eventually read *The Servant as Leader*. The other book that I love is *Love and Profit* by Jim Autry. It's not difficult to say why. It's just the tone of voice. Just some really nice stories as well. I've never forgotten that one he told about special exception. He was in the U.S. Air Force and his wife was very ill. And he asked his commander, "Can I go home? My wife is very ill," and he said, "No, Autry. If I make a special exception for you, I'd have to make a special exception for everyone else." And then, when James Autry became a CEO, he realized his job was making special exceptions for everyone and no one minded, because they knew that people who had special exceptions made for them deserved it, and that they would, if they needed it, they would get it. So, there's lots of his writing that I just love. It's both profound and fun at the same time. Also, I love the fact that one of his books is of poems about growing up as Southern Baptist. Again, I think what you get from Jim is a sense of human connection.

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Larry: John, in terms of readings on servant-leadership, are there particular essays or books that you have found that have spoken to you in a very meaningful way?



John: Well, the first one, not surprisingly, is the initial essay by Robert Greenleaf, *The Servant as Leader*. In a different context, Stephen Prosser wrote a publication on servant-leadership [*To Be a Servant-Leader*, Paulist Press, 2007] and I reviewed it, not for publication but he asked for my views on it. I was very enthusiastic about what he'd written. Another of his colleagues who reviewed it noted, "It was like eating a whole stilton," and that phrase has stuck with me. Reading *The Servant as Leader*, I mean it's not that many pages long, but it is like eating a whole stilton. There is so much there! I know it's kind of a popular comment to say, but every time I go back to it, I find something new; every time I discover a different emphasis. I think I told you about Roger Wilson, who wrote an essay many years ago called *Leadership, Authority and Concern* [Quaker Books, 2007], and the kernel of servant-leadership is in there, too. He was a remarkable guy. I remember reading it for the umpteenth time and then going into a meeting with him and said, "You know, Roger, I just read *Leadership, Authority and Concern* again. It's a wonderful piece of writing," and he kind of put his arm around me and he said, "You know, it's a funny thing, I just read it recently too. I'm amazed to find out how much I thought I knew back then." He'd first written it in 1947 and we were now talking mid-1980s, something like that. Beyond that, I think *Love and Profit*, and also *The Servant Leader*—both written by James Autry. I think those are the two that I go to time and time and time again. And again, it's both kind of finding something new, but it's more kind of reassurance that he did say what I thought he said. Jim's books are very powerful. So those are the three books that I have close-by the whole time.

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Larry: How did the two of you first get together?

Ralph: That was because of you, Larry. You put me in touch with John—sometime in the late 1990s. I can't really remember. It was such a long time ago. I certainly remember being with John at the Ann Arbor conference in 1997. We were wandering around the car park of whichever hotel we were in and saying to each other, almost simultaneously, "Well we should do that in the UK." I got on immediately with John, and it's felt like that ever since.

John: I had written to you and Ralph had written to you, and you had put two and two together and suggested we met, and we did. We met at Friends House and I had just purchased, or recently purchased, the video of Meg Wheatley's *Leadership and the New Science*, and I thought that was a good thing for us to sit and watch together to see if we both had the same reaction. Now, I had seen it several times over because I had started, well, our training secretary had started to think about how we might plan to use it in Friends House. I don't think Ralph had seen it. But anyway, we had a genuine meeting of minds, and so we began to just gradually edge towards the possibility that we might find a kind of a UK voice, if you like, for the servant-leadership we had begun to hear from the other side of the Atlantic. So, we had several meetings and then we had what I thought was a crucial meeting at South Bank University in 1995 or 1996. It was around about then. Ralph and a colleague of mine from Friends House, and a current professor at South Bank University and someone he knew, all met together one evening. And we were all edging towards the same kind of idea. We liked the concept of servant-leadership. It made sense to us. As Quakers say, it spoke to our condition, and it was a case of: what could we do, what was our voice, what could we say? And so that was the kernel of it,



but nothing particularly grew from that meeting, as I recall it. But then, Ralph and I both came to the 1997 conference that you ran in Ann Arbor, and at the end of the event we were heading off in different directions. I was going to New York, I think; Ralph was coming back to the UK. And just sitting there together, waiting for a bus to the airport, we decided what we really should do is just take a leap and see if we could start something in the UK. So that was how it started. And then, of course, very soon after that, as you and Richard Smith were in London, we took the opportunity - at a level of notice that these days would make my blood run cold - to put together that very first conference. We had, you will recall, a group of about 30 people, with quite a number of my colleagues from Friends House in attendance. At the end, we asked people if they would stay behind to discuss whether what they'd heard made sense, and whether they thought there was something more we should do. And it was a Friday evening where people in London normally rush to get the tube or the bus or the train home, and a large proportion of them stayed behind. So, we were off and running. By the time we left the Mount Royal Hotel on Oxford Street that evening, we had the makings of an initial board for the Greenleaf Centre-U.K.

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Larry: Do you recall when and where you first encountered the term servant-leader, and any initial reactions you had upon hearing the term?

John: It was in a Pendle Hill pamphlet called *Quakers and the Use of Power* [Pendle Hill Publications, 1982] by Paul Lacey. It is a fascinating read. It's funny. It's perceptive. It's another classic whole



stilton, if you like; lots of examples of faithfulness and lack of faithfulness in carrying out various tasks. Some of the stories in it I have used in presentations. I got to know Paul later on, and invited him to take part in and lead a session at a conference I was running for people in personnel functions in Quaker organizations, and Paul joined us for the whole conference. He was a great writer and a wonderfully engaging speaker. He had a depth of knowledge and a lightness of touch, which made both his presentations and his writing immediately accessible. Paul also delivered a Swarthmore Lecture, entitled, “The Unequal World We Inhabit: Quaker Responses to Terrorism and Fundamentalism”. It was the most inciteful and challenging lecture, as is the resulting paperback. Paul died a while back, and I was sorry I didn’t have the chance to say, “goodbye.”

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Larry: Any favorite quotes or writings by Robert Greenleaf? If so, what and why?

Ralph: The definition of the best test. I mean for a paragraph to contain such depth is amazing. It’s my touchstone on servant-leadership. And then I like the quote about having fun and not taking yourself too seriously. Robert Greenleaf talks about a lady farmer driving a tractor and she says that you need a light touch to farm. I like the fact that for Robert Greenleaf, humor, lightness, was an essential part of it. I mean we are dealing with very serious stuff. He was taking it seriously but not in a serious way, or maybe not in a dogmatic way. I think that dogmatism kills a lot of folks.

John: Well, I think the *Best Test* immediately is the one that comes to mind. There’s just so much in that paragraph. It’s like a servant-



leader's roadmap. You know, it starts with you, as an individual, and then expands the area of application from personal to community and then to the wider world. I mean, the reading of the *Best Test* for me now is entirely different from the time I first read it. When I first read it, it was about how you operate in organizations. Now, I read it as a roadmap to a safer world. The implications are for the whole world, the human environment, the physical environment and everything else. I think I now have some inkling of how prophetic that particular section was. I mean, there are other things that I've enjoyed in his writing, but that's the one that stands head and shoulders, if you will, above everything.

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Larry: Do you recall any initial thoughts or reactions to servant-leadership at the time that you first encountered it, either in the Paul Lacey essay or as you went to reading Greenleaf's writings?

John: It just simply made sense to me and it gave me a clearer – not exactly a clearer voice - but perhaps a clearer language in which to express the things I had begun to believe very strongly, ways of working, ways of being. They were kind of amorphous in me, but the leader as servant first, suddenly I thought 'that's it, that's it.' And I mean it wasn't like a flash of light or anything like that, but it just 'oh, right, okay, I understand that.' It was as simple as that. And then everything expanded on from there, but it was that one moment that made a difference really, and changed my life for the next 30 years. Ask my wife, she'll tell you how long I take over this stuff.

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Larry: Is there anything else you would add in terms of what servant-leadership means to you today, how its meaning has changed over time?

Ralph: It's pretty much remained the same. I think it's probably become slightly richer. And that's not through the reading but from working with it and talking to people about it. And through the conferences and being in one room and you pick it up. It's like Jack Lowe talking about the time someone asked him who made the strategy in your company. He looked at her and said "Well we do. We're the board." And she replied "but that's not servant-leadership." Jack replied: "Well it is really. Because you know we're all trusted to do the jobs that we're supposed to do." And I thought absolutely, that's servant-leadership. That's trust and respect.

John: Well, it hasn't changed, but it has developed, I think, and expanded. I recognize far more acts of what we might think of as indicative of servant-leadership in people I know well. I've come to understand, in fact, that far from being a new or a novel way of leading, it's actually something that's been around forever. I truly believe, as Meg Wheatley said in her interview with us nearly 20 years ago, this is really the only way forward that makes sense. We live in very dark times at the moment, but there's something I find in people who aspire to servant-leadership, that is relevant and consistent.

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Larry: I think one of the great things Greenleaf did with the term was just helping people find one another through many different ways. Can you talk some more about the formation of the Greenleaf Centre UK and its impact over the years?



Ralph: Well I think we just decided we'd get on with it and we did have help from you and some of your other servant-leaders in the USA. And it sort of brought it all together. I think at the beginning--we've had so many conferences as you know, Larry. But I definitely remember we had quite a lot of visitors from the USA which helped get it off to a good start. It took us a while. My memory is it took us a while to find servant-leaders in the UK.

John: I think that Ralph and I came to the same point at the same time and thought there was an opportunity to try to establish a UK presence or a UK focal point. We knew it was going to be hard work, but we determined that we should start small. We've not tried to replicate large conferences, and never thought that was a role we could play. Once we go above 40, we lose something of the character of the conferences we have established. We've set a pattern for ourselves that these would be wholly interactive conferences, where the role of the speaker was more to introduce the topic and then for everybody else to take over, or certainly be involved. So, it has been more of an expanded workshop setting than a formal speaker/audience/applause kind of deal. But we always came to the view that what we had to do, having seen the experience of other Centers, as soon as you finish this conference, you must begin planning the next one. Or in the course of doing the current conference, to try to identify issues that have emerged that we could answer next time around. The thing has always been: what can we do for others that they have let us know they'd like us to do?

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Larry: Are there any recollections that stick in your mind from the early years of the Greenleaf Centre-UK?

Ralph: Some fantastic input from people coming over from the US, including Jack Lowe Jr. and others from TDIndustries. And then the middle area was much more us finding people in the UK who were regarded as servant-leaders. And I think the essential thing that was happening was, we were building up a community. And that to me was the most important thing we did, you know. John got Lance Bloch from South Africa, Benjamin Phangela from South Africa. We had Di and Ali Feldman from Australia, and quite a few UK people. It just felt like there was a really good mixture of people.

Larry: And the last ten years?

Ralph: Very much more on the community thing. I think my favorite quote is from John Hearst, who was a staunch Jungian psychologist and a great supporter of servant-leadership, which was “It’s not an event. It’s not a conference. It’s a happening.” And the importance of the fact that we all got together and we could just share, and the speakers triggered off discussions and topics, but essentially it was the group, the community that made it. And that still feels the same today. Stephen Prosser was another great contributor, and he wrote several articles and books on servant-leadership. He brought the “academic” side to Servant-Leadership in the best sense of the word; he searched for truth and brought depth into the discussions, and I valued him enormously. I mean the key red thread if you like, all through this has been the community. At the core there is that sense of service.



Larry: John, other reflections you have on the early years of the Greenleaf Centre UK?

John: Well, it was a new venture, and so we were still finding our feet. We had a very good first conference. We were very lucky to be able to get Richard Smith the second year. Then I think in the third year, we managed to persuade the U.S. Greenleaf Board to come over, and so we had riches a plenty. In the third and fourth years, we had speakers like Jack Lowe from TDIndustries, and Stephanie Alford from Synovus. We ran a joint conference with Happy Ltd. in 2008 and that was extraordinary with some very special speakers. We had the actress, comedienne and mental health campaigner, Ruby Wax who talked to us about awareness; that was powerful stuff. But I think it was all building up to 2010 and beyond, where I think we've now got the pattern that we were always hoping to get to, or maybe unconsciously planning to get to. I think that's all we can do with the resources we have. The real resource we have is the people that come to the conference, our "regulars," people like yourself. They're the ones who are planting the seeds and then it just grows out from there. And all we're trying to do, I think, in our conferences and occasional workshops is just enable this to happen. Every conference isn't better than the one before, but I never feel we've slipped back.

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Larry: Ralph, are there any cultural changes that you've noticed that have helped to expand or contract interest in servant-leadership in the U.K.?



Ralph: It's a very good question. I'm in slight despair actually. You would have thought that changes would have led to more people being interested in servant-leadership. I don't see it. People come and go. But given the cultural shifts and things like that I think there is a greater need than ever, I think people just find it very difficult to tune in to servant-leadership.

Larry: And why do you think that is?

Ralph: Because there's so much emphasis on competition, on survival. I mean the austerity program that the government imposed on the U.K. for a long time has led to lots of people needing to use food banks for example. And you would think that from a central leadership point of view, that would lead to people to say, 'well we need to look after them more.' But it hasn't. It's like okay, we've got to fight to survive. And of course, we've been monumentally distracted in this country by Brexit.

John: That's difficult. I'm remembering a board meeting that I sat in on in New York years ago, probably the year 2000 maybe. Frances Hesselbein was one of our guests at that meeting, and you asked her where she thought servant-leadership was going. And she said to you, "You've got until 2008 to really establish it; and if it's not established by then, you will struggle," or words to that effect. She was quite clear. And of course, in 2008 came the financial crisis when everybody suddenly retracted back into the old ways. So, I think we went through something of a fallow period at the time, where the people who did practice servant-leadership continued to practice servant-leadership. I wasn't directly involved in any of this because I've never been that involved in a commercial company, but my sense is that a lot of places retracted into the old ways of doing



things even though if challenged, they probably would have admitted that the old ways didn't work. But they were familiar. I think there was a surge in interest in servant-leadership in the early 2000s. I remember you talking about it like a stream turning into a river, that sort of image. And I don't think that has happened here in the U.K., but what I do think it's maybe in an even stronger position, in that servant-leadership has kind of moved into the mainstream, or it's part of the mainstream. In other words, any leadership book you read now, if you turn to the index, you'll almost inevitably find at least one reference to servant-leadership. Twenty years ago, that didn't happen. I mean, I'm now sometimes surprised at some of the books that don't have it in the index. But we're still going through the kind of tough times, I think, where organizations retract into the old ways. So, I think the time ahead is still challenging, but I think we've built up a head of steam or there's a stronger servant-leadership base. What I am troubled by, however, is how servant-leadership seems to have become the subject of academic research, as if it was something that is measurable. And I know I'm going to get in trouble with some over this, but it's nothing to do with your head; it's to do with your heart. Or it starts with the heart first and then the head realizes that the heart has been right all along, if you like. And it's that sort of thing. And when I see people trying to quantify servant-leadership, it's like trying to quantify the color of a flower or how you feel when somebody you care about comes into the room, you know?

Larry: Yes, I do.

John: Am I being too fanciful and romantic here? You know what I mean? Once you start, it's like I know absolutely nothing about motorcars, right? It's like me taking an engine apart and then trying



to put it back together again without really realizing what the purpose of the thing is. So, servant-leadership research with a view to widening its interest, fine. But to try and analyze it down to the last dotted “I” and crossed “T”, I see danger in that.

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Larry: Are there a couple of personal characteristics of any kind that have served you well in your life?

Ralph: I think the most important bit is listening. Linked to that is respect. And I see the two going together. I wouldn't say it's always served me well because again, when I've worked with some companies, they've expected me or the people working with them to exemplify loads of energy, opinions. Almost like the role model of a hero. They sometimes don't agree with the fact that listening and respect is actually a key component. A quick story. There was a well-known retailer which is no longer in existence, and doesn't surprise me. The board had a meeting and I asked the sales director how do you get your people to sell? And I quote “They're all lazy good for nothing people on the shop floor. So, I go and shout at the regional managers, who shout at the area managers, who shout at the store managers, who shout at the staff and they finally get off their butts and do some work.” And at that same board meeting the H.R. director said “look, the turnover is (and this is 20 years ago) costing us twelve million pounds a year. If we could actually put in place a system where we actually looked after our staff, we could save all that money straight to the bottom line and the rest of the board just shouted at him and said “don't be so stupid!” And I still think there's some of that around. Quite a lot of that actually.



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Larry: How can one go about overcoming ego when you're in a leadership position?

Ralph: Well it's not very easy. It's incredibly difficult because as soon as you think you're overcoming your ego, you're not; you're being egotistical. I think the key for me is to focus on service. To be there for other people. To be open and honest about your mistakes. To admit that you don't know everything. But overcoming ego is a lifetime's work. The Jungians, and I am very interested in Carl Jung, the Jungians talk about this and the Eastern philosophies talk a lot about overcoming ego but it's incredibly difficult. I don't think ego is "I'm the best." Ego is also when we beat ourselves up and say "I'm the worst." That's ego; it's a mental picture of who we are that hasn't got much basis in reality, but I think ego is like a shield or an armor around us. And overcoming that is very difficult. There are some people who have what we would call traditional egos in the sense that there's self-aggrandizement etc. But also, there's so many more people whose egos are very fragile. Those who are suffering mental illness and anxiety is certainly on the increase. And that's an ego thing.

John: Well, Larry, I think this is where the characteristics that you gleaned from Greenleaf's work help enormously. And as always, and we discussed this the other day, listening always comes first and I'm still working on that. And just recently I rediscovered a Greenleaf quote. I remember Ann McGee-Cooper talking about a meeting she had with Robert Greenleaf where he said practically nothing. And of course, that's exactly who he was. He listened. And I rediscovered



this quote that I shared the other day: “Would anything I could say improve upon the silence?” I’d like that to become my mantra. My wife would tell you, and anybody who has spent any time with me knows that’s a real hard row for me to hoe.

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Larry: In 2008, the two of you co-edited a servant-leadership anthology, *Servant-Leadership: Bringing the Spirit of Work to Work* [Management Books 2000 Ltd.]. How did that book come to be, and how would you describe it?

Ralph: Well it basically came about because we knew a lot of people who’d been to the conferences and John and I felt they had good things to say. We felt that they needed bringing together and essentially the book tried to be a reasonably practical and more multifaceted look at servant-leadership. And to try and give people some sense of what they could do.

John: Well, we felt we should try and prepare something for publication drawn initially from the U.K. experience. We then decided fairly soon afterwards that we should widen this out to make it more of an international experience. I felt it was a useful thing to do because it was essentially a snapshot of where we were at the time and the sorts of things we were trying to bring together. Mind you, when I say a snapshot at the time, there was a delay in publication, and I felt that when the book finally came out, although I was pleased that it was there, and it was a marker, the delay in publication was quite frustrating. But having said that, we had lots of friends and colleagues who had given their time and experience and provided material for the book, and it’s still there on the Amazon list.



Larry: By the way, I've used your book in several intensive classes that I teach at Gonzaga University. Student responses to it are very favorable. They appreciated what is in there.

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Larry: Ralph, you've done consulting work and presentations on servant-leadership over the past 25 years with a variety of institutions. Are there one or two or three experiences that stand out in your memory; and if so, would you talk about them?

Ralph: I haven't done a lot but what I have done is to help those people who want servant-leadership to implement their values around Servant-Leadership. I think what they want is a more practical way of implementing it. And what I found is that the Characteristics of Servant-Leadership that you gleaned from your analysis of Greenleaf's writings is a very good way in. So, I mentioned listening earlier, but you can go through them all. And it's essentially about getting people to talk about what this really means in their organization; in their interactions. And using practical examples. My favorite example is with a care home where I was being told that a resident who is about 80 years old wandered out the back and was chatting away to the young chef who was about 18 and they were just having a lovely conversation. And the young chef was just listening to this 80-year-old and just having a discussion about football or something but it didn't matter. That was the sort of idea—the young chef didn't need to be told about servant-leadership; he exemplified it. And, I think that when you get those examples those are the ones that you say "yep." It's practical. How do you actually behave? For me that's important. And what examples can you give?



Because we all know that it's incredibly difficult to be a servant-leader at times when you will feel stressed or whatever. But if you can cling to the fact that at times this is what we need to do. Incidentally, this is one of my caveats about leadership development. Most people talk a lot about behavior change but they never really change or look at their day-to-day behaviors. It's like saying to a footballer come play football and this is the theory but we won't bother to coach you on how to kick the ball or defend or tackle. Even coaching, talking to people in leadership. It's about words. It's not about seeing people in action. And I think that's a great failing of leadership development. And I think with servant-leadership we've got the opportunity to say well look. Listen to someone. Respect them. Ask them about their growth. So, I think there's a whole arena that can be gone into in depth.

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Larry: John, how have you encompassed or incorporated servant-leadership in your work and presentations?

John: Yes, I think the one that first leaps to mind perhaps because the scale of it, was giving a one-hour presentation to a group of several hundred students at a school in South Africa. The presentation started at 8:00 a.m. on the morning that the school closed for Easter break, so I was deliciously aware that I was the only thing standing between them and their vacation. They were terribly attentive and very quietly responsive. To begin with, I thought 'my goodness, I must've done that well,' but as I have reflected more, I'm wondering whether they were very quiet so not to extend the time any more than necessary. But it was interesting; I'd never delivered a presentation on servant-leadership to a group



that size before— but I found it very comfortable. Another one was the first all-day workshop I did for the Sisters of Nazareth in Dublin. They had brought in a number of their folk who were engaged in various social and community projects throughout Ireland. I was just totally inspired hearing about the work they were doing and really felt humbled and grateful to be with them. I'd never had any real contact with nuns before, and I found them to be engaging and funny and very much living in the real world. Since then, I've done several workshops with the Sisters of Nazareth and with several other religious denominations as well. I've constantly been surprised at how much fun the Sisters are, and how open they are to critical comments about some things that have happened in the church. I found them caring, open and thoughtful and possessed of a lively sense of humor.

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Larry: John, how many conferences has the Greenleaf Centre UK run up to this point? And thinking back over the conferences, are there either people or experiences that stand out as highlights for you, and how so?

John: Well, we've had 23 conferences without a break. Lots leap out, of course. Danah Zohar came to us one time and she had us in the palm of her hand. It was astonishing how well that session went. Ruby Wax, who is best known as a comedienne, was with us for the joint conference in 2008 that we did with Happy Ltd., and she led a session on awareness. It was unlike anything we'd ever heard before, but it was actually very powerful. Another one that springs to mind is a woman called Marion Janner who talked to us about a program that



she had established called Star Wards. She had been a patient herself in a mental ward and while being treated, she had worked out what was wrong with the system and what could bring more normality into the system. She devised this way of treating people with mental challenges. And a few years back we had an extraordinarily revealing and markedly upbeat session led by two blind presenters that I guess will stay with those of us who were present for a very long time. And the list goes on.

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Larry: Ralph, have you done any work outside the UK that has encompassed servant-leadership in any way?

Ralph: In Uganda with my wife Ahrabella we worked with the Ugandan Health Clinics as part of a sponsorship by Comic Relief and implemented by a great small charity called PEPAL. We talked about servant-leadership to them but as health care workers they really exemplified servant-leadership and understood the need for community support and service. Ugandans are not perfect, but many of them are natural servant-leaders. There's a very good article written by a Ugandan newspaper woman about when Mandela passed away about how Africa needed servant-leadership. Leaders like him. And I still remember there's a photograph of a sign. In the West Nile which is up north in the middle of nowhere in Uganda that says "to serve to lead"

Larry: It's a striking visual isn't it?

Ralph: Yes. And there's a very interesting bit on African leadership. And again, people are people the world over but, there



was a very good point being made by an African historian that in tribal leadership, the chief was not the boss. He was the leader, but the chief's job was to get consensus; was to exemplify the will of the tribe or the clan and not to give orders, so in other words, they were a servant-leader. When the colonialists came in, we needed people that we could give orders to and that role then changed. And they become much more of a conventional leader rather than a servant-leader.

Larry: I've seen a few things written over the years and that seems to me that the African concept of Ubuntu and maybe even Harambee have some resonance with servant-leadership.

Ralph: I think they do. You and Richard Leider wrote a good essay about hunter-gatherers and servant-leadership.

Larry: I think there is, just looking at Africa, it seems like there is. There have been pockets of activity and articles that I've seen over thirty years that whether it's called servant-leadership or something else, the concept is there. That reminds me, in the servant-leadership courses at Gonzaga we use films to supplement the texts and *Invictus* is one that has really spoken to a lot of students, I think

Ralph: Absolutely. Mandela was a true servant-leader; there's no question about that. Ahrabella and I do an exercise called world leader. You can have anyone to lead the world from past, present, future with the exception of religious leaders. But it doesn't matter wherever you are, wherever you run it, the person who comes up 90 percent of the time is Mandela and that's in the UK just as much as Uganda.



Larry: And Bishop Tutu has been there also.

Ralph: Tutu as well. And Gandhi used to be, but people don't remember Gandhi as much now as they used to.

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Larry: So, as we are having this conversation in November of 2019, both our home countries, the United Kingdom and the United States, are in the midst of political upheaval. At times, it seems that servant-leadership is an alien concept to our political leaders. Have you seen any signs of servant-leadership in all that has been going on around Brexit, or has it seemed totally absent to you?

John: Well, the answer is, sadly, no. Not if you're just looking at what's going on in politics at the moment, and much of that here has to do with Brexit. We're in a very dark place at the moment, and it's fueled by political partisanship and irresponsible interventions on social media. As we were discussing earlier, I think most members of parliament, or a significant number of members of parliament, have received threats of one kind or another. And of course, as I mentioned also, a wonderful young MP called Jo Cox was murdered by a self-described right-wing extremist – the day before the Brexit vote. She was a brilliant young MP with a great future. I mean, this isn't the forum to debate the rights and wrongs of the Brexit question. I think suffice it to say it's caused divisions in the UK, the likes of which I've never known before. And as things stand at the moment, I can't see how it can be resolved. I mean, again, it's not for this forum, but we're jumping off a cliff without any real assurance of what we're jumping into. And I'm particularly worried about the future for my daughter's generation and the one after that. But



anyway, I think what troubles me most about it all is we get phrases like “the people voted,” as if nobody voted any other way, you know. So, the divisiveness is extraordinary, and of course it’s additionally fueled by newspaper headlines. Someone took a case to court about the way that the government was bypassing Parliament in seeking to secure a withdrawal from the EU and the matter was adjudged in her favor. And the next day the judges’ photographs were on the front page of a newspaper with the tagline “Enemies of the People” under it. That is very, very dangerous. I found myself reading Timothy Snyder’s book *On Tyranny* day after day after day and seeing the warnings that were in that book coming to life all around me. So, it’s a dark place. Servant-leadership is still there, but it’s not something that’s addressing this problem. Nothing is going to address this problem apart from time.

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Larry: If you had the chance to speak with Robert Greenleaf, is there a question or two you would like to ask him, and why?

Ralph: I’d like to just really ask him about his life. How he made the decisions he did. Especially when he was looking after leadership development. I’d like to see it as a meeting of two people sharing expertise and me learning from him about why. You know how he’d run the programs; what he thought the programs were. In other words, I think there’s no need to discuss the values with him because I’ve read about them and I know his values. But to get a sense of the man himself and how those are applied in his life and work is what would be in a practical sense, would be the most interesting thing. I think he’s articulated servant-leadership so well so I don’t really find



a need to talk too much about that, but more about how he's applying it; how that works in practice.

Larry: Yeah. And it occurs to me that he developed a course in receptive listening that was taught at the Wainwright House for decades, and there was a kind of manual that he and others put together over time which was geared toward helping people to become better listeners.

Ralph: Well that's the sort of thing that I would like to know much more about. I like the fact that servant-leadership doesn't have a lot of theory. You know, it's a philosophy. Stephen Prosser said it; that it's a philosophy, not an academic model. And that's why every organization and every person will do it slightly differently, but coming from the same set of values. And that's fantastic.

John: Well, curiously enough, the answer to that is "no." I picture Robert Greenleaf as a slightly crusty Quaker. I remember when he was in Crosslands, the Quaker retirement community in Pennsylvania, the management approached him for help with a staffing problem, and he essentially said, "No, sort it out yourselves." And that has stuck with me, and I thought, 'yeah, you're quite right, it's not your responsibility anymore.' And I think that's the consummation of his work, that he's built the foundation, we've now got to build on it. If we keep on just going back to what he said, it will gradually have less relevance because of the changing times. What he's laid down are the principles, the foundations, and you don't go away from them, but you use them, in the context of contemporary challenges. I suspect he was a pretty modest guy, too, and I think he might be slightly embarrassed if we were still asking him the same questions 50 years on. But I'd hope he would give us a



comment, say, “Work it out yourselves. You know, I gave you what you need; now go and do it.” So, I wouldn’t ask him any questions. I might say “thank you,” but I do remember that there was a time he told them to sort it out themselves, and that’s quite right.

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Larry: Greenleaf uses the term “spirit” and “spirituality” with some frequency. Is there a particular meaning of spirit or spirituality in the workplace for you?

Ralph: Well it’s a very deep question Larry. I’m very wary of anything that prescribes that. I think for me my spirituality in the workplace is essentially about respecting other people. And that’s always a difficult one. It’s about respecting people’s views. And I wouldn’t want to feel that anything was being imposed upon people. I think it’s too easy if you have a work organization for spiritual values and when I say spiritual values, I mean people’s views to be imposed on others and to become cultish. So, for me there’s a freedom within respect. But there is something about respect and tolerance to a degree. My own views on spirituality is that it’s for everything. I mean work is a really significant place for me. Spirituality is about understanding the meaningfulness of life and existence. Work and family are prime arenas to really put service into operation.

Larry: It’s interesting that I think Greenleaf did use the word spirituality sometimes but he more often was using spirit. In *Seeker and Servant*, more than in any of his other books, Greenleaf really wrote about the meaning of spirit for him.



Ralph: And that's lovely because I think that regardless of that if you start thinking of work as purely as a mechanism for making lots of money or exerting power or anything that is something that negates spirit. So, for me, spirit is a means of people keeping themselves on the path and not getting them be led astray by things that really will not bring them any happiness.

John: Well, I was helped in my thinking in this by Bill Guillory, who has written a lot about spirituality in the workplace. I took my cue from him, I guess, and it's simply living out your values in every situation. I'm remembering something I picked up and I use now in presentations, that it's actually much easier to apply your values 100% of the time rather than 98% of the time. Otherwise, you'll get found out. In other words, you've got to have a hell of a good memory for what you haven't been truthful about. You know, I shared that funny quote from Groucho Marx: "These are my principles; of course, if you don't like them, I've got others." And people like that always get found out.

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Larry: In our Gonzaga courses, we include films as part of our learning tools in graduate classes. Are there particular films that you have come to think offer good depictions of servant-leaders, and what are they?

John: Well yes, obviously George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life*. No surprises there. Juror #8 played by Henry Fonda in the 1957 version and then Jack Lemmon in the 1997 version of *12 Angry Men*. The Glenn Holland character in *Mr. Holland's Opus* takes a job as a teacher to make money in order that he could still work on his



symphony. Then he becomes a totally dedicated teacher, dedicated to serving others; and, as a result his pupils and colleagues essentially become his symphony. I find it a very moving film. I think to some extent the Ray Kinsella character in *Field of Dreams* is another example of servant-leadership. He's giving up everything in order that something else happens for somebody else. The first time I saw *Field of Dreams*, it was with a psychiatrist who interpreted it far more quickly than I did. In fact, we came out of the cinema his first question was, "What's *your* relationship with your own father?" which was a difficult question at the time. And then of course the film 42. Jackie Robinson was a servant-leader. He curtailed his own first instincts to achieve a greater opportunity for everybody else. I mean, black players would have made it to the Major Leagues eventually. There was no way that would be stopped. But he kind of broke the ceiling. He broke the lock, if you like, and gave a great deal of his own self to open the door for other people. If that's not a definition of servant-leadership, I'm hard pushed to think what it is. I think it's a very broad definition, really, and that's fine.

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Larry: There's the Quaker phrase "speaking truth to power." Have you found ways in your work to encourage people to lovingly confront people in power when things are not right, but to do so in a way that also honors those in power as human beings?

Ralph: I coach people on that, but very cautiously. Very cautiously, because I know that some of the people I've worked with, if they were to speak truth to power, they'd probably be out of their jobs. They'd be victimized. It's a very difficult area. And I'm afraid I



think that a lot of the structures simply don't allow for it to happen. Speaking truth to power is not something that people in power like. And they have mechanisms of making certain it stops. We've seen lots of examples of that with whistleblowers who've been punished. The other thing that I'm deeply shocked by, and I shouldn't be, is that it's often made in organizations that are set up in service. Some charities have some of the worst examples of speaking truth to power. There was a report on Amnesty International about a year ago, and the board resigned. They had to resign because of examples of bullying. In many ways, I find it easier to consult in a conventional organization. There's a bit more truth sometimes.

Larry: Greenleaf felt that businesses would be the place where servant-leadership would take hold first, more so than other kind of organizations.

Ralph: Well, and I think I have seen that, too. L'Oréal is number one in the world for sustainability. Number two or three for ethics. Certainly, one of the tops in the world for gender balance. Even though their people are working incredibly hard, there is a sense that they are probably more able to speak truth to power in that organization than some of the others. Let me give you an example. I didn't know this until recently. They have what they call an ethics day. You give anonymous feedback on all your managers. And your managers have to respond to this. So, there you are. And it's being noted by H.R. and other people and it's just positive as well as negative. And it's just a really great means of making certain that people live up to what they should; the values of the organization.

John: Well, not surprisingly, I've used both Stephen Covey's and Jim Autry's approaches in this. For example, Covey's amended talking



stick procedure, which I think is just wonderful. The original talking stick, where I give you the stick and you can talk and I've got to shut up, and then I take the stick and I talk and you shut up, it's fine, that's established. But Steven's refinement of, "before I talk, after you've spoken, I've got to reflect back to your satisfaction what you have said" puts a whole new level in this altogether, and there's got to be something far wrong if you can't respond to that. So, I think of the conflict resolution idea, that's right up there. Jim's advice also of when tempted to give a direction, ask a question, "What do you think we should do? How do you feel about this?" rather than, "I think we should do this," or "I think this is how it is." That was an eye-opener for me, too. And it's amazing how effective that is. I've certainly used that approach when I've been giving a presentation and I have one or two difficult questions to address. I say, "Does anybody else have another idea or another question to ask?" "How would you reply to this?" You know, involving the group is always a good idea because that's when you suddenly find that you've got allies as well!

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Larry: What thoughts or hopes do you have about the future of servant-leadership?

Ralph: I think the most important bit for me is that younger people take it on. And it just becomes almost a way of working without. I'm not saying you shouldn't think about it but it's just accepted as given. And I think we are beginning to see this in the younger generations. There is a recognition that work is more than just earning money. So, I have high hopes. And I think we need someone to bridge the gap, though



John: Well, I'm always hopeful. Obviously, I'd like to see more organizations perhaps draw on the examples of, say, TD Industries and Southwest Airlines in the U.S., and Happy Ltd. here in the U.K., to inform their leadership ethos, because I think not to do so risks the waste of the most valuable asset we've got, which is people. One of the most influential lectures I ever attended was one where the speaker, in an otherwise unremarkable talk, suddenly shared his conviction that only people add value. Money doesn't add value. Technology doesn't add value. They achieve tasks, but they don't add value. And it's crazy that we don't actually make more use of people, particularly younger people. I now think nobody over the age of 50 should start in a leadership position. It should always be somebody younger than that. Where we are now, it's got to be that way to break through and effect change. The way we'll address the physical environment crisis, is by the people who will be most affected by it. It goes back to that thing I spoke to in the presentation. You know, it'll take 400 years to pay off the U.K. national debt; okay, so it's not our problem, is it? You know, that's the attitude I feel sometimes that the older generation, of which I am a part, views climate change. Okay, the sea will come up over the houses, but I'll be dead by then. That's no way of thinking, and that's not what servant-leadership is about. We should be serving the next generation. The best way of doing it, in my view, is to give them the authority to start making the decisions. Now!

Larry: Native Americans have the idea of serving seven generations ahead, making decisions that take that into account, and this sounds similar to that.

John: And they understood the physical environment problems way before we ever thought about it. They could see it coming.



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Larry: Do you have any closing words of hope or advice for servant-leaders around the world?

John: First of all, I hesitate to respond to this question, largely because I'm thinking 'who on Earth do I think I am giving out advice?' I always think that. But also, I truly consider myself to still be a student of servant-leadership, just the same as everybody else. I do have a story that I think I may have shared with you before. Segovia, the great guitarist, became a father at the age of 77. His young son came home from school one day and said that everyone in class had been asked to explain what their fathers did for a living. Apparently, Segovia said, "And how did you answer?" The little boy said, "I said my father was a student of the guitar," and Segovia liked that! He loved that response. And I consider myself still a student. I am still learning. My real hope lies in my daughter's generation and the one after that. So, if for a moment, I presume to give advice, it would be that organizations should increasingly look for their leadership among those younger people, which is what I've been banging on about just recently, because that's where the change will come. I know that's difficult and I did suggest that to my own organization in 1998, and that formed part of the interview we had with Meg Wheatley. But I do keep thinking, as was obvious over the last two days, I keep thinking the prophetic words of the Kenyan proverb: ***We do not inherit the world from our parents; we borrow it from our children.*** I think encouraging our own governments to act on that might be servant-leadership's most important challenge yet.



Ralph: For me trust and hope are what matter. I would say keep the faith in doing what is right in spite of all the negative things that are around us. There is an amazing amount of good going on in the world and whatever we can do to help in that as servant-leaders is what is essential. It's not about grand gestures but in our day to day acts of kindness that make the difference. And I know both John and I feel this very strongly, we have the younger generation that exemplify many of the values of Servant-Leadership. As a Sixties person I like to feel that they bring the humanity of the hippies with a sense of reality and practicality – and without the drugs!

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Larry: Is there anything we haven't discussed pertaining to servant-leadership in any way that you would like to share your thoughts or insights, comments? Anything we missed?

Ralph: I was recommended a free online course called "The Science of Well-Being" run at Yale by Professor Laurie Santos. It's a great course and full of practical tips for thriving. For me, although she doesn't mention Servant-Leadership, it fits very much with the values of Servant-Leadership and also the characteristics you described Larry. For example, what makes us happy is kindness to others (Service) and social connection and a focus on meaningful experiences rather than materialism. Amazingly spending money on others makes us happier than spending it on ourselves even when we are in poorer countries. I think this reinforces our basic human nature of which for most of us Servant-Leadership is a vital part. So do review the course and use it to continue on your Servant-Leadership Journey.



John: Well actually, come to think of it, I think there's an awful lot more servant-leadership going on than we perhaps understand. I think people who work together on a fishing boat practice servant-leadership. People who work together on a farm practice servant-leadership. Okay, you see, as time as gone on, Larry, I see servant-leadership as a much wider concept than it was when I first started looking at it. I think maybe what I'm talking about is the teamwork aspect of servant-leadership. Each one actually is a leader in the group. At one point or another, we're all leaders and we're all servants. If somebody in a fishing boat falls overboard, do you think they actually reach for their job descriptions to see whose job it is to throw the line in to save them? No, they do it automatically because it's part of being human, it's part of being in a community. I sometimes feel I could go to a group of fishermen where I was born in Scotland and talk to them about servant-leadership and they'd say, "Oh, we know that. Oh, that's what it means – oh we do that all the time. We've always done that. My grandfather did that." You know what I mean? I think there's a great big base of it that we don't have to worry about because they're there anyway.

Larry: Right. You don't have to have ever heard the term servant-leader to be one. In fact, I would say there are many people who are servant-leaders in the world or aspiring servant-leaders who have never heard the term and, like you are saying here, I think we underestimate the number of people who are doing work as servant-leaders and trying their best to act as authentic servant-leaders—not perfect servant-leaders, as they don't exist—but authentic, nevertheless. I find that very encouraging. It really is.



John: Well, it is, because at the same time in a funny way we still need to keep on talking about servant-leadership.

Larry: Yes, we do.

John: Because in a sense, people will also have the ability to say, “Well, that’s what I do. Yeah, okay, I now feel vindicated. Maybe I am doing the right thing. Gosh, I never knew I was a servant-leader! That’s good to know.” – you know what I mean? I don’t want for that to sound patronizing at all, but in a way, us talking about it and giving validity to those acts. I also think there’s a danger in saying there’s an awful lot of servant-leadership going on because there are elements in servant-leadership which are not the same as being just a good colleague or a good team member; there’s other bits as well. They’re not absent in the examples we’ve given, but they need encouragement, and maybe we’re waving a flag up in the air and saying this is good stuff, you know, maybe it’s the ultimate, waving the flag to see who salutes. But in a sense, and this is my final thought on it, all the time I was working at Friends House, we had projects overseas and our main aim was to be able to lay those projects down because they will be taken on by the people locally. So, we would go and say, “Let’s build a well together,” and then we let it go, we move on because it’s now their project. And in a sense, the ultimate consummation to success of the servant-leadership movement would be when we don’t need it anymore because it’s all done. Now, you and I smile knowing that day will never come in our lifetime, but isn’t that the aim? We don’t need the Greenleaf Centre U.K. because people do it, everybody does it, it’s what you do. But it is the aim, I think, not to be necessary, and the job is done when we don’t need to do it anymore. And that will be a great day.



Larry: I want to thank you, John and Ralph, for participating in this conversation. And I especially want to thank you for all that you have done, and continue to do, to encourage awareness and practices of servant-leadership in the United Kingdom and around the world. I value so much our friendship over the past three decades.

Larry C. Spears is president and CEO of the Spears Center for Servant-Leadership (www.spearscenter.org), Indianapolis, and he serves as Servant-Leadership Scholar at Gonzaga University,



Spokane. He is a writer-editor-teacher and contributing author to 34 books on servant-leadership, including the critically acclaimed *Insights on Leadership* (1996), *Fortuitous Encounters* (2013, with Paul Davis); and, with Shann Ferch, *The Spirit of Servant-Leadership* (2011) and

Conversations on Servant-Leadership (2015). He also served as an editor on all five books of writings by Robert K. Greenleaf. Larry serves as senior advisory editor of *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*. From 1990-2007, Larry served as president and CEO, and also as Senior Fellow and President Emeritus, of The Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership. Since 2008, he has served as Servant-Leadership Scholar for Gonzaga University's School of Leadership, where he is an adjunct faculty member and teaches graduate courses; and, as President of The Larry C. Spears Center for Servant-Leadership (www.spearscenter.org).

Among other honors, Larry has received the "Outstanding Leadership Award" from Chapman University in California (2002); the "Dare to Lead" Award from the International Leadership Network (2004); the Community Leadership Award from DePauw



University in Greencastle, Indiana (2008); a special recognition from the Greenleaf Centre-United Kingdom (2015); and, as the inaugural inductee into Gonzaga University's School of Leadership Studies' Hall of Honor (2018).

In 2004, Larry was interviewed by NBC reporter Stone Phillips for a segment on servant-leadership that appeared on NBC's DATELINE news program, which was seen by ten million viewers.

Ralph Lewis works in Leadership Development. His work involves designing and running leadership programs at all levels but especially with senior managers; coaching individuals and groups,



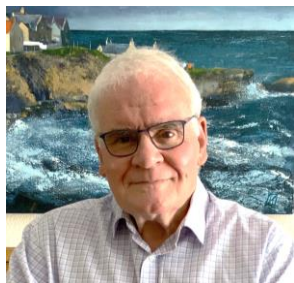
running skills workshops in areas such as communication and problem-solving, and facilitating business and team meetings. Organizationally he has been involved in many culture-change programs. He also runs action learning groups in the private and public sectors focusing on innovation

and performance issues. In 1997 he co-founded the Centre for Servant-Leadership in the UK together with John Noble and has helped run their annual conferences. Ralph has designed and ran programs for companies in the insurance and finance sectors and also the pharmaceutical sector at London Business School. Elsewhere he has run programs for the computing and public sectors.

Geographically he has extensive international program experience in Europe, USA, Asia and Africa and has run leadership programs for a Health Charity in Uganda funded by Comic Relief leading to an International Conference on Leadership in the Health Sector. Ralph has written or co-written several books on leadership development and many articles on change, strategy and leadership competencies. His most recent book is *Developing Inner Leadership*.



John Noble worked in both the scientific and financial areas of the U.K. civil service before being appointed Personnel Manager for the central work of Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), with overall responsibility for the personnel



matters for both their U.K. and two thirds world work. Along with Ralph Lewis, John set up the Greenleaf Centre for Servant-Leadership UK in 1997 and, since leaving his post with Quakers some years later, he has devoted a good deal of his time in developing and extending the

Centre's work. John has led and contributed to a large number of conferences, workshops and seminars on servant-leadership principles and practice with groups of consultants, leaders, managers, wider staff and student groups throughout the U.K., Australia, Ireland, South Africa and the United States.