



Dear Global Leadership Summit Community:

As each day brings us closer to The Global Leadership Summit, our expectations and excitement continues to grow as we prepare for an experience God will use in powerful and transformative ways—in cities around the world, in businesses, churches, nonprofits and in the lives of individuals.

We want to make sure you are informed about the recent circumstances surrounding Bill Hybels. You may be aware that, Bill Hybels, senior pastor of Willow Creek Community Church, was accused of misconduct and inappropriate behavior, and these accusations are now being investigated by the church Elder board.

As a result, he accelerated his retirement from Willow Creek Community Church. With the full agreement of the WCA Board, Bill has also resigned from the Board and all leadership responsibilities and will not appear or speak at the Global Leadership Summit. As you can imagine, it has been a very difficult time that has required both faith and faithfulness as we trust God moving forward.

There is no question that Bill has had a significant impact on this ministry, but the Summit has never been about one person. It has only ever been about the mission to ***energize Christians and mobilize churches globally by growing their leadership skills and commitment to maximize Kingdom impact.*** To that end, the WCA Board of Directors is meeting often to pray, seek and discern God's leading as we face this challenge head-on and respond to this in a manner that respects all parties concerned.

As we discussed and discerned how we learn and lead through this situation, we reconfirm our commitment to:

- 1) **Continuing to be at the forefront, especially in the church, in empowering women in leadership**—respecting, supporting and maximizing their leadership gifts and encouraging them to use their influence and their voices. The Summit has historically been a place that champions the gifts and contributions of women leaders. We renew our efforts to assert and affirm the value of women leaders in business, in church, in the home, in nonprofits, in schools, in government, in the arts and entertainment, and beyond. We hope to be a voice that brings clarity to how women and men lead and live together in ways that respect and honor one another and glorify God.
- 2) **Caring deeply for the women who have stepped forward and brought their concerns to light.** We will reach out and seek to listen to all with love and respect. Our desire is to

see repentance, reconciliation and restoration of relationship, providing an environment of acceptance, forgiveness and healing where the Spirit of God can work for mutually beneficial resolution.

- 3) **Walking with Bill Hybels during an appropriate season of reflection**, providing support and help that can lead to a place of reconciliation and restoration. As mentioned previously, Bill is no longer on the WCA Board and has no role in WCA or the Global Leadership Summit. Our prayer is that together we take the steps necessary to ensure that truth is known and healing can begin.

We ask that as we journey forward together, you would pray for each of these commitments, and for God's continued blessing on The Global Leadership Summit. We are grateful for the grace and favor that God has generated through the Summit, and we look forward to seeing how He will guide our next steps.

As a result of the challenging circumstances, in addition to Bill's absence, we have had three speakers choose to leave the Summit faculty this year: Denzel Washington, A.R. Bernard and Lisa Bodell. While saddened, we respect their decisions and have added four new faculty members to the lineup: John Maxwell, Sheila Heen, T.D. Jakes and Carla Harris (view the full faculty lineup [here](#)).

We believe—and are planning for—this year's Summit to once again be used by God to birth grander visions, to broaden and deepen the influence of leadership globally, and to maximize Kingdom impact. Now is the time for the Church to unite in the spirit of healing and restoration.

We are grateful for your support and prayers and we *are grateful* that despite the difficulties that face us, we know God will work in powerful and transformative ways.

Serving together,

Tom De Vries
President
Willow Creek Association

Dick DeVos,
Board Chair
Willow Creek Association

P.S. We understand that this email may bring up additional questions. Please email us at crc@willowcreek.org and we will do our best to respond as promptly as possible.