

How did I get there? 1981 Torrey Conference

By Mark Lee

Speaker 1: To credit the crowd that we have this evening. And every evening there have been Tory conferences where evening sessions were noticeably smaller than morning, even in the elective time. And I believe it's not only because it's topic that is interesting and questions are actually questions that are being asked and answered from the word of God in a practical way, but because of the servant that God has brought and because the time is always a problem to Dr. Lee, we'll give him as much as we possibly can. Let's welcome once again, Dr. Mark Lee.

Lee: Yes. Thank you very much. It's so much better to preach to people than the good old empty seats. And you're very gracious. And coming was true four years ago, five years ago when I was here, 76. I remember we celebrated 200th anniversary of something or other in 76th. And it's great to be back here again. And I only recognize three or four of you who have stretched four years into six. And it's good to be a part of this program. It's a great idea whether we who are part of if it do well by you or not, it's still a great idea. Some books have been put in the bookstore. My wife and I will pick them up tomorrow, the remaining ones at noon. We were asked to put some in. But then since we'll be leaving tomorrow, we'll pick them up before we leave. So those of you who wish to get any of the books that I have written that are available there, you be sure to do it by noon tomorrow. In the morning at 10:00, I'll be in this room where we'll try to finish the 50 questions. And then at 11:00, the closing session in the gym.

I'll be there. Let's see, 830 is Dr. Guernsey. So 830 there. Then there'll be some other program there, and then I'll be here with those of you who like to come. All of the 50 questions have been

picked up, so be sure to bring your copies, borrow a copy or steal a copy. There are few in here. I didn't mean steal it. I mean take one that belongs to someone else. And if you say it right, it always comes off all right.

On Monday evening, I talked to you about the barriers that we create. We call the mountains we called the mountains of blessing and the mountains of cursing. You can take anything in your life and you can turn it into a mountain of blessing, stepping stones to higher elevations. Or you can turn them into mountains of cursing. Whatever they are, you can turn them into mountains of cursing. It's interesting to me that my marriage and family, which is such a benediction to my life in someone else's case, has turned into a mountain of cursing. And they would almost rather be without life than to survive their family. What is the difference?

The differences in us not in the marriage. Someone said to me one time, what defines a good marriage? I said, there's no such thing as a good marriage or a bad marriage. There are only good or bad people in marriage. And if we would ever get over the idea of blaming marriage or any other institution and recognize that it can be turned into something good, it can be turned into something ill. That was Monday night. Tuesday night we talked about who am I? And we discovered that I am an intimate person born to a sense of love in my interpersonal relationships. I am also a person of service, generativity I want to serve if I am mature and I start by serving the members of my family and reach out to my more distant neighbors to serve them. And then finally, if I become the person I ought to become, especially as a Christian, I become a person of integrity. That is, I now act as in the Christlike life because I have become Christ like. If indeed I

have that integrity, I no longer act like the carnal man of the world, but the spiritual man that I am meant to become.

Who am I then? The next night, last night we talked about Where am I? And a lot of this has been discussed by various authors. I'm either in hiatus, in a kind of empty spot between one activity and either the resumption of that activity or something else. Or I may be in my tradition and so tradition bears itself upon me. Or I may be in the discovery period of my life, launching out, risking, taking some opportunities, enormous turmoil. I can either approach that with the idea of great discovery or I can approach it with a spirit of rebellion. I can approach it because I'm turning away in perhaps even hatred and disgust from those who have been a part of me turning towards something else. It is likely that I'm not going to discover what I ought to discover if that's my attitude, or I can turn away with their blessing, with the idea that I must become my own person. I must learn to stand on my feet. And so I PROCEED, or I'm at the end of certain goals in my life. And now I must set new goals in my life. And the thing that we discovered that you will not generally find as you discuss these concepts or read about them in the literature is that all four of them are operative at once.

Therefore, we are dealing with a multi-dimensional life that we must live up. Now, tonight I want to talk about how do I get there? Now, if we had had five nights, I would have put the gold concept in tonight. And tomorrow night, if we were meeting five nights, I would talk about what I am going to talk about tonight. But I slip that in during the day. It belongs in this series. How do I get there? One of the ways in which I get there is to set goals for my life, goals with God, and these become the goals that move me in the direction of the discovery that ought to characterize my life. But there is something else that must apply, and I'm hearing a repetition of

it. I suppose one of the reasons why we hear that repetition is because one of the concepts that the new President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, hopes to achieve in the course of this four years that he serves as President. I don't know if he expects to run for another term or not, but he has openly admitted that at his age he should think at least basically in the thought of one term. And what can he do in one term as the President of the United States? And when someone asked him for one word, his word was renewal. And that's what I want to talk about renewal.

Now, one of the problems I've discovered in working with people is their inability or their unwillingness. It's not really an inability, but an unwillingness to take the time to develop the perception of how they can become the person they ought to become by renewal, no matter what you have, no matter how beautiful it is, no matter how meaningful at the moment, even in relationship to a righteous act, unless those things are renewed, they become old and stale, and they seem to wear out on us. One of the problems in a marriage that is so seldom handled the way it ought to be handled is that it has not been renewed.

I was speaking in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, which shows that I have good diction, but I was speaking there and talking about the things that my wife and I do to renew our relationship. We've been married for more than 37 years now. What will make that marriage new? And so I was talking about the things that we did to renew our marriage.

It wasn't this message, another idea, but renewal. And I said that one of the ways we did it was each day we did certain things. We made certain gestures, we made certain statements that we would get up in the morning and I would say to her, I love you, or she'll start it off by saying, I

love you. And so each day we make sure that we tell each other, I love you there. That takes care of that. For the day after I said that, this fellow it was a seminar. It was going all day on Saturday. And so he raised his hand. I said, yes, sir. He said, do you mean to say that every day of your life in relationship to your wife, you say, I love you? I said, yes, sir. She's in San Francisco, and I'm here in Saskatoon tonight. After all of this is over, I will phone her and tell her I love her on the telephone. If I'm away from her, I call her. If I'm with her, I can tell her face to face, I'm a brave man. And he says, you really do that? And I said, I really do that.

And he says, well, he says, I think that's a waste of a lot of energy. I said, what do you mean? He says, I told her I loved her when I married her and I'm a man, I'm a word. And as I looked at the woman sitting next to him been his wife for about 40 years, she hadn't been told 40 years she was loved. If we can only understand, we need renewal. We need renewal. And therefore we pray, we need renewal. Therefore we read the same scripture we've read before we need renewal. So we repeat some of the basic things in our lives that make a difference. And we need to understand that we need renewal. We need renewal.

Now, of course, we're not very articulate without the Scripture. There are a number of passages that I could use, but I must make reference to the one that I suppose means the most to me because it has such an overpowering spiritual meaning. Psalm 51 is a marvelous Psalm. Those of you who are already acquainted with the scripture will know the Psalm as the Penitent Psalm. David is guilty of every sin in the book. He's gone finally to the last one, and that is murder causing the murder of the man who's married to the woman he wants to take for himself. And so I'm not going to read through the whole Psalm because I'm not talking about confession and

forgiveness, but I'm talking about a marvelous principle which as he comes through his prayer and as he's making his way out and as he realizes that God is going to have something for him, he says something that's absolutely marvelous. Notice verse ten. I happened to be reading from the King James tonight. You have probably some other version before you. Psalm 51:10. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me, renew a right spirit within me. Now, if there is created in me a clean heart, and if there is renewal, the restoration of something that was great before that, I have lost what will happen? What will happen if he creates a right spirit within me and renews if he creates a clean heart within me and renews the right spirit, this is what will happen. Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy Salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit, then will I teach transgressors thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto thee. In other words, I have that kind of promise. If I go through this process, starting with a clean heart and a renewed spirit and the other factors, what do I discover. I will discover that then I will be able to teach transgressors the way of God and sinners shall be converted unto thee. And if there's anything that a Christian wants, he wants to be able to give a witness that will bring men to the Savior. It seems to me that's what they want.

Now let's talk about this whole business of renewal. There's a lot of literature you can read it, some that is now being published and some that is old. And when you get through reading some of this literature, the nausea of SART or any one of a series, you come to the conclusion with the poet that in all the world only man is vile. Now, I don't like the thought that man is vile. That man is a worm. We used to sing that.

And in most of the new Hindles that's been changed. I'm sure that it's not really fair to the author because he recognized that man, given a certain perception, is indeed vile. As you look on the face of the Earth and you wonder what is contaminating it, you can be sure of this man has done it. Now how are we who are made in the image of God and called vile, called a worm, how can we indeed become Christ like Godlike in Christ? Well, it seems to me that one of the things that we must do to accomplish the purposes we've been talking about is to have renewal. Renewal is absolutely necessary. It's inescapable. In the New Testament, you have two words commonly used for new. One of them means brand new hasn't existed before brand new, and the other is to make new that which was once new and is not now new. Now we don't detect that as we read the New Testament. But if you go check your Greek concordance, you will find as you go through the New Testament that sometimes you have new meaning brand new, and sometimes you have new, which means renew the important thing when you get through. And this is an overpowering impression that you'll get from the Scripture, and that is that renewal is necessary. Renewal is necessary.

If you want something that's going to last, you're going to have to renew that thing over and over and over again. Real life has renewal in it. Many years ago, I traveled across the country and I preached in 70 cities in 70 days. And I remember that one of those cities was Spokane, Washington. When I got to Spokane, Washington, on the same day that I got there, a magazine, a well-known magazine at the time this many years ago, came out and Duncan Hines everybody used to eat restaurants that Duncan Hines would recommend and stay in, motels that Duncan Hines would recommend, and he came out recommending the ten best hotels in the United States. Now, if anyone would ask me where they were, I'd say, well, they must be in Chicago and

New York and New Orleans and San Francisco and other places like I probably would have said that. And Lo and behold, if one of the ten greatest motels in the country, according to Duncan Heinz, was in Spokane, Washington.

Now, can any good thing come out of Spokane, Washington, 180,000 people on the Eastern part of the state of Washington? And Lo and behold, one of the ten best places to stay in the country was Spokane, Washington. Out on Sunset Hill, as you go out towards Seattle or toward Coolie Dam, I had to see it. I drove by it. There it was. I'm given to looking at the great things of the world, one of them being the motel in Spokane, Washington. Well, I didn't know it, but seven years later, I didn't know this was going to happen. Seven years later, we moved to Spokane, Washington. Now, my wife wasn't with me on the first trip, so I decided, Spokane, what can you do in Spokane where you can look at the mountain, Mount Spokane? And then, of course, you've got to go out and see one of the ten best motels in the United States. And my wife didn't seem too excited, but I took her anyway to show this motel. We drove out on Sunset Hill and there was a big sign over the driveway, closed for renovation.

Now, when you see that on a hotel or motel and nobody is allowed in, you can be sure of this. They are closed, period. I've been in enough hotel motels in the world to know that if they are renovating, they don't close. They work right around you. In fact, one time and my wife was with me and they were renovating it and they came right through the ceiling. I called down and ask if we couldn't have another room. They said that's the only room we've got. They actually had to move us to another hotel. That's what they would do. They will renovate around you. Well, it wasn't long until I got to know some people in Spokane. I was sitting with the editor of the

newspaper and the damn Port Hotel having dinner. And I leaned over and I said, Bill, there was a motel. It shows how I can get trivia in my mind, never get rid of it. And I said, Bill, that motel is still closed for renovation. They have the sign. The sign now looked like it needed renovation. And I said, what happened since, you know, everything happens around Spokane? And he said, you know, that was a kiss of death. I said, what do you mean? He said, Duncan Hines said that it was one of the ten best places in the United States. That was a kiss of death. Within a matter of months, the owner sold it because it had such a reputation. The people who bought it didn't know how to run the business. Before you know it, the carpets were all free. None of the TV would work. I says, I've been in a lot of hotels where the TV didn't work, and before you know it, the place was so run down that no one stayed there. So it's closed.

Now. In the meantime, I've been going over to Seattle, finishing my educational program at the University of Washington, and I would always stay in this one motel. When I got there on North Aurora Avenue in the days before the great highway, the interstate, I five cut its way across the abdomen of the city. You used to have to go up on Route 99. So I would go up there about 45th street, and I'd stay at this place. And one day, as we watched them, as they were building that great freeway across the city, over, down, over on the other side, I said to John, the manager, I said, John, what are you going to do when they finish that thing?

And this is no longer the traffic, that no longer the traffic goes by. He says, I'll always have the business. I said, what do you mean? He says, as long as I do what I do, my customers will always come back. I said, sure, the American people being what they are, they're going to find hotels somewhere else. He says, they'll come back. Well, the thing was finished. I had to go to Seattle

one day. I didn't call, drove 300 miles across, went up on North Aurora Avenue, everywhere the motel vacancy, vacancy, vacancy, vacancy. That used to be the main artery. I got to John's motel and I looked no vacancy. I went in. I said, John, I want a room. He said, I don't have any. I said, Number six, which was back of a barricade so I could avoid the noise from North Aurora. He says, I don't have it. I'm sorry. He says, there's nobody I'd save a room for if you'd let me know. I says, I just didn't think you'd be full. He says, I'm always full. I told you so. And I said, John, tell me why, tell me why all those vacancies all the way down as you go downtown?

He says, Well, I go into the first unit with my housekeeper. And I say, if you had the money and you were permitted to spend it, what would you do to bring this unit up to Snuff? And she says, well, she might say to me, I'd buy new drapes. And so then we go in the next unit, we look and we see that the drapes, it would do well to restore them. And so I call downtown. They come out and give me some bids on them. And then I have new drapes put in the first five units, and then the next five the next month and the next five the next month until all of the units have new drapes. And then we go back into unit number one. She said, I got new TVs. I haven't come out, give me a bid. I put in five TVs this month and five TVs the next month. He says, I have renewed this motel over and over and over again. It's almost 30 years old, and you didn't know it. I said, no, I didn't. The difference between the number one hotel, or at least in the first ten in Spokane and one that you wouldn't have ever heard of in Seattle was the difference in renewal?

The difference in renewal? Why is it that whenever I get to know people well, the difference in them is often the difference of renewal? I suppose that all of you have heard the story of the Peter principal and the Paul principal. Most people seem to know the Peter principal, but they

don't know the Paul principal. The Peter principle is that you got ten people working for you at this level, and they're doing very well. So the thing that you do is promote them. Now they're all moved to the next level. Five of them aren't doing too well. They could do well at level number one, but level number two is a little beyond them, and so you leave them there. The nature of our work is that you leave people up one level beyond their competency. So there they are. You take the next five and you promote them. Three of them now are not doing too well. You promote the other two. So that the whole concept, according to the Peter principle, is that people are level at one level beyond their competency. If they were wise. A man shot me one time when he came and said, put me back where I was.

And by the way, he got back where he was, learned what he needed to learn, and then we were able to move him up again. But he recognized that something had happened that was going to go badly, moved me back where I was utterly shocked me. Now the Paul principle is this one. You've moved a man into a job. He does very well. He does very well this year, next year, five years from now, in ten years, he hasn't learned very much. That's new. He's not doing anything differently than he did ten years ago. And by the time he's reached his 15th year, you'd do anything to move him out. He was effective, but he hasn't renewed himself. He hasn't renewed the job. He hasn't renewed his relationships. He doesn't understand what's happening. And by the way, I meet more people who are the victims of the Paul principal than the Peter principal. And someone comes along and says, well, he's just stayed too long in that job. No, that's not the problem. It's not that he stayed too long in the job. He hasn't changed in ways that he must change. If that job is to make any difference, if he is to make any difference to the job.

He has not renewed himself. If we can only understand that that's a part of the whole business, even of our spiritual life, our family life, everything else that we do. How am I going to renew it? By the way, it's a great principle to learn for your classes. I used to make my notes on about four, five of a page, and I would say one fifth of the page in which I would put one word or two words or three words, and I put one, two, three words to characterize whatever went into that large paragraph. When I looked at those words, if those words would recover that paragraph for me, I'd go on to the next words. I could almost always, by hurrying to the next class, I could almost always renew myself in that class right up to date. Within about five minutes, I'd miss out and I'd pick that up. But I'd have most of them. And then just before finals, I would almost always go shopping or do something that I wanted to do and go fresh into my exams. And someone said, well, why don't you spend time cramming? And the answer is, you don't need to if you learn the secret of daily renewal of the things that you're supposed to do.

And by the way, it was just as easy as it could be. It really was. It's simply a matter of setting up a system whereby you learn how to renew yourself readily each day of your life relative to the things that count that you're doing. If you know anything about history, take a look at the States and the nations that could renew themselves. According to the historians, New England wasn't supposed to make it. They were supposed to be weasened by a narrow concept of society that was somewhat puritanical. Virginia was supposed to flourish and flower instead. In the 19th century, New England flowered. And Virginia did not. Why? Because one of them was taken by slavocracy. One of them found themselves unable or unwilling to renew themselves. Slavery was a part of New England, no question about it. But they recognized that that was not a movement of the future, that wasn't an institution to be kept. And so they renewed themselves by actually

outlawing slavery in New England. But this group was unwilling to do so. The state that gave us our first presidents, who had leadership just born in the Warp and Wolf of the whole existence of that state, what went wrong?

They were unwilling to renew themselves. I was teaching in Minnesota. We took some students with us over to the state house. At that particular time at the Capitol, the governor of the state of Minnesota was Luther Young Dahl. And I remember we walked in to talk to the governor. I'll never forget because the irreverent way the students treated me. I was invited in, shook hands with Luther Young Dog, governor of Minnesota. And then I walked out of his office and now all my students were all lined up. They wanted to shake the hand that had shaken the hand of the governor. You know, they were very irreverent, but nevertheless, this is what happened. And then someone came and talked to them, and one of my students, who are sharper than the rest, that fellow stood there halfway berating the students for not participating in state government, not showing the kind of interest in their government they should. And this student not unkindly, not at all, with no judgmentalism at all. He says, I just saw by the newspaper that the legislature has put a burlap bag over the clock in the legislature. Why did they do that?

The student knew, but he asked and the fellow answered back. He said, well, according to our Constitution, you're only allowed to meet. Now, it escaped my mind whether or not it's 60 or 90 days every two years, and we now have to meet longer than that to get the work of the state finished. And so on the last day at five minutes to twelve, we cover the clock, and from then on, for whatever number of days we meet, we simply date it at five minutes to twelve on the last day that we're legally permitted to meet. And the student says, that's the way you do it. He said, that's

the way we do it. And he was so clever that that's the way he did it. And then the student said to him, But Sir, you expect us to support a government that cannot renew itself, a government that cannot pass a law to make it legal to meet? And the fellow says, well, it takes a little time. And the student then said, Well, I suppose if we need to streamline our government somewhat in an urban society for a Constitution that was written in a time when the rural society rules, I suppose we ought to do that.

And the man says, oh, yes, but we'd get the job done anyway. And then the student asks a question, I'll never forget it, sir, do you get paid 90 days or the actual number of days that you work? And the fellow hemmed and hard for a moment. He says, we get paid the number of days we work. The Constitution doesn't say anything about that. It was interesting, you see, that the fellow was saying to the students, support something. And the students were saying, hey, we'll support it, bring it up to date, renew it. And I was utterly shocked when I moved to the state of Washington, discovered they did the same thing in that state, simply covered the clock rather than to renew the government. As a result, many of us have lost some of our sense of commitment because we haven't learned or we have learned that when an institution does not renew itself, that something goes wrong with that institution. I've lived long enough to see churches establish, rise, flourish and fail. And if you'd asked me why did they fail? The answer came because they didn't have the ability to renew themselves.

They didn't know what to do with that auditorium. They didn't know what to do for that people. They didn't know how to adjust to a changing neighborhood. They had not learned the secret of renewal. What is renewal? I like to think that renewal is something like a second wind. I

remember when I ran on a track team, you may not think I look like an athlete. I had quite a figure, but the sand all went to the bottom. And I used to run on the track team. And I can remember the coach saying to me, you're tired because you haven't really learned yet how to run. And I said, well, coach, how will I know when I know how to run? He says, when you learn how to run, you'll get the second wind. And I said, I'm sure tired with the first one. And he says, you just keep going. You just keep going. And if you keep going until you have learned how to do it the way you ought to do it, you'll be surprised. And one day it happened. It was just like a kind of minor miracle. And those of you in the room who've gone through it know exactly what I'm saying.

I used to run and it felt like my legs were so heavy and I just walked from here or better yet, crawl and all of that. And then all of a sudden that day I was running. I was running, and I felt like I could just go on forever. Just like one of those slow-motion films that you see on television and the movement of the whole body and everything. It just looks so beautiful and so wonderful. And I went to the fellow who was the coach, and he was a great guy at one time. He held the world's record for the mile. Just an absolutely wonderful fellow. And he says, I told you it was just a matter of sticking with it until you learned the secret of how you renew your body. He thought that the second wind was like renewing your body. You commit yourself to a marriage. Those marriages at last have the second wind given to them, a renewal that is given to them. We could go on and on with these. How do you do that? You do that a lot of ways. And may I say, without giving an undue compliment, I think that these Tory lectures are elements of renewal.

Persons have talked to me privately. They were coming along and certain things were happening, and then certain other things began to happen and they needed to be charged, they needed to be challenged, they needed to be changed. They needed to be shifted. They needed to renew themselves. I speak all over the country and I go to these conferences, especially in the summertime or on the weekends in one or another conference place in California, as we can do in this state. And Lo and behold, sometimes I see the same people, and we have become close friends. In fact, my wife and I spent a couple of hours this afternoon with a couple whom we first met at one of those couples' conferences. That's how they became our friends. And they've kept track of us, even though they go to other parts of the world and wanted to see us because we were here and contacted us today and we were together. Those people will come back year after year after year, and you'll say to them, what are you doing? And the answer comes back in one word or another, we're renewing our relationship, we're renewing our marriage, we're renewing our family.

And that's exactly what they do in that process. About what was it 20 years ago? The Pope died and the College of Cardinals came together, 70 Cardinals to elect a new Pope. Now, there was a real tension in the College of Cardinals. They were divided between the Liberals and the Conservatives, and they just didn't know what to do. So they decided they had an agreement between them that they would elect what one of them called the rocking chair Pope. The idea is get one that's old enough, health, not too good, and you'll elect him and he'll die within three or four years. And that will give us time to put our house in order because we've had a poll so long that we just haven't had a chance to think about it. And there have been enough changes in the College of Cardinals. And so that's exactly what they did. They elected a man who was about

and he was about as wide as he was tall, a great oversized fireplug. And they elected him Pope. And so they walked up to this fellow and old, not terribly healthy, fulfilled everything that they expected for a rocking chair Pope.

And they said to him, the first great decision he has to make when he's elected Pope. The first decision is, what is your name? And he says, I'm going to be called John. Yes, John. We haven't had a Pope John. And we don't know how long someone had to go and look it up. And he says, John, he says, it'll be John the 23rd. Oh, we've had 22 other Pope Johns. Yeah, that's right. I'm Pope John 23rd. You really want to be Pope John wanted to be Pope John. And so he was Pope John. Once you're elected Pope, you can tell them anything. He's Pope John. Then he began to talk to them. And when someone proposed that he set in his rocking chair, he says, that wasn't my idea. That was your idea. Well, what are you going to do? I'll tell you what I'm going to do. The first thing I'm going to do is talk to a separated brethren. You and I who are Protestant Christians, are separated brethren, he said. They love the Lord. I want to talk to them. I want to find out what they're doing. I want to find out why some of them are so successful and why we're so unsuccessful in certain parts of the world.

I want to find out if we worship the same Jesus together. And he called what we now call Vatican One, and then he called what we now call Vatican Two. And he died right there at the end of Vatican Two. He died within this period of time. He's supposed to die, but what did he do? That man said to his Cardinal friends and to all of the bishops and to the people who would listen to him, something's gone wrong with our Church. And when they raise the voice, what's gone wrong? He says, we have not for many years learned renewal. And just when we did not

learn renewal back there in Luther's day, he challenged us with a Reformation. Someone's going to be smart enough to challenge us with another Reformation unless we do it ourselves. Now, we don't know where the Catholic Church is going, but they're on their way. And I mean that in a kindly way, because Pope John introduced an idea and some people have grabbed the ball and run in the wrong direction, I'm sure, from what he meant to be achieved. But nevertheless, if you'd ask a Protestant today to name the Catholics who he most admires out of history in the ten would appear Pope John the 23rd.

You know, we're a part those of us who call ourselves Protestant Christians, we're part of a renewal of a man that didn't really think that he was going to separate from the mother Church. But when he started renewal and he found those who would not renew with him, it became the Protestant Reformation. I had to have a Reformation in my life from time to time. I ought to have renewal in my life from time to time. Now, how do you do that? You go to work on it, and it's going to have to be something that you're going to be willing to pay some price to get. It's going to take something. It's going to take some scraping and some painting and some repairing and some shifting and some changes of ideas because you're going to renew yourself as the need is present today. If you don't do that, if you don't do that with a school or a Church or a whole country, then ultimately it will perish for the lack of being made new again. There's a marvelous book written by a man by the name of John Gardner. I'm certain it's in your library.

You go find it. It's simply titled Self Renewal, Self-Renewal by John Gardner. John Gardner's book is a marvelous book. He will challenge you in various ways, not necessarily from a Christian point of view. Though he argues for a belief in God, he will not argue the evangelical

position but he'll tell you something you need to know and you can carry over the principles very effectively. He said, you know, our lives are like a garden when we do something with them. That's right, we plowed the whole thing up, we have planted it, something has happened there in that garden and later on certain things in the garden begin to dry up. Some of them may even get a disease. So what do you do? You don't take out the whole garden, you go and you work with that plant, you take it out, you hold out the weeds, perhaps you give a little extra water or you manure another part of that garden, you repot a plant over here, you change a Bush over there and the same thing is true in our lives. You look at your whole life, I don't ask you to reply the whole thing, I ask you simply to report a portion here to hold out something over there and that is what renewal is really all about.

But it takes a new perception, it makes a new perception of the way you think of the inevitability of progress and you need to understand that you remember the story of the woman, young woman, beautiful beyond our Billy to describe. And her father is in this enormous debt to this ugly man, ugly not simply in physical appearance but ugly in the way he did his business. And so the man, finally having her father in enormous debt says, I will forgive you the debt if you give me an opportunity to marry your daughter. The man refuses but the daughter hears of it and the daughter volunteers her life if necessary to save her father and then the word comes back that she will stand and take her chances. Now the secret is that the man will put a light stone and a dark stone in a bag and then she will reach into the bag and draw out the stone and whatever stone she draws out will determine her future. But whichever stone she draws out, the father is forgiven the crushing debt. If she pulls out the lightest stone she will have to marry the man. If she pulls out the dark stone she does not have to marry the man even though her father's debt is forgiven. Now

what would you do? The woman watches him very carefully. He chooses two stones out of the torrent bed at their feet and as she sees him pick up the stones she sees that he picks up two dark stones and puts them into the bag.

Now what's she going to do? Is she going to challenge him and of course he can make an excuse. Oh yes, of course, excuse me. And then he could choose a light stone but instead of that she decides to let it go, because she's going to think differently than anyone else in the crowd could think. And so it comes time for her to choose the stones. There are two dark stones in the bag. If she draws a dark stone, she marries the man. So she reaches into the bag and draws forth a stone, and she draws forth a stone. She inadvertently hits his arm and drops the stone. Oh, we'll have to do it again. No, sir, we will not. We'll find out what stone is in the bag, and then we'll know what color stone it was that I drew from the bag.

Now that's another way to think, friends, from the way you and I might have thought whenever I challenge you renewal. This is a different way to think. It's a different way to think. See if it can't take hold of you. May I close with this? You're right. Time always runs away from me. I lifted something from this marvelous book of John Gardner, and I'd like to read it in closing for our evening programs. In John Gardner's words, modern man is master of his physical environment, but not yet master of himself. Gardner asked, Is ours an ever renewing society? And then he answered, as of today, it is not. But we could change that. The individual is the seedbed of innovation and change. When a civilization is on its way to greatness, the spark of its hopes and aspirations Burns brightly in the breaths of its citizens. If that spark goes out, nothing can save that nation. When a civilization is on its way to greatness, the individuals are always growing

too. If they ever lose their capacity for self-renewal as individuals, the light of that civilization quickly dims. Gardner describes four characteristics of the ever-renewing individual.

Here they are: one, self-renewing people are versatile and adaptive. They are not trapped in the techniques, procedures, and routines of the moment. They are not fully imprisoned by fixed habits and attitudes. Two, for the self-renewing person, the development of his own potentialities and the process of self-discovery never end for him. It is sad but true that most human beings go through life only partially aware of the full range of their abilities. By middle age, most of us are accomplished fugitives from ourselves. May I say here by way of parenthesis, why is it that all the people I counsel, virtually everyone 40 years of age, wish that they could do it over again? Not because they enjoyed it so much, but they wish they could do it again, so they could make right all the things that they did wrong? We become fugitives from ourselves. For example, he uses this illustration. How long is it since you failed at anything? If it has been long, you're in poor shape. If you are sufficiently adventurous. This doesn't apply to classes. If you are sufficiently adventurous, you are sufficiently willing to try new things. You will stumble fairly often.

I was asked to do a job for some people. They drove me through a portion of town where they had house after house after house, and they had put those houses there. And as we drove through, they said they had done that at that time and that at that time. And we came back and went into the office. We went into the office. They asked me how I liked their housing development. I looked at them. I said, what's that? You said, we want to know how you like that housing development we just took you through. I said, Well, I'd like to do this as diplomatically as

possible. That is the ugliest place I've ever been for people to live in. Philip says, what do you mean? I said, Those are the ugliest homes for brand new homes that I have ever seen. In fact, I wouldn't want to live in one of them. And the fellow looked at me. I said, I suppose this means that I don't get the contract. He said, no. He says, we were waiting to see what you thought of that. And then we were going to decide whether or not give you a contract for the job we want you to do.

I was to do a seminar for them if I was given the contract. I said, what do you mean? If you hadn't told us that that was the ugliest thing you'd ever seen, you wouldn't get the contract because that's the ugliest place that you could imagine. I said, but you did it. He said, well, we didn't know it was going to come out that way, but that's where it came out. I said, what do you mean? He says, we lost \$4 million on that track. And I said, well, that's too bad. He said, no, it's not too bad. I said, Why? He says, we learned enough. We made 52 million on the next one. They actually laughed at it. He said, that's our failure by which we learned so that we would do this this way. And I said, you mean you learned by your failures? That so shocked me. He says, yes, don't you suggest that? And I said, from now on, I will. Number three. Self-renewing people have mutually fruitful relations with other human beings. I'm going to say something terribly important. They are capable of accepting love and capable of giving it both more difficult achievements and is commonly thought.

I meet a lot of people who can give love, but they can't receive it. They don't know how to receive it. I know a lot of people that can, soak it all up, but they don't know how to give it. The secret is to be able to give it and to be able to receive it. And what has that to do with self-

renewal? The man or woman who is incapable of accepting love or giving it is imprisoned, cut off from a great part of the world of experience, love and friendship dissolve the rigidities of the isolated self-forces, new perspectives, alters judgments, and keeps in working order the emotional substratum upon which all profound comprehension of human affairs must rest.

Fourth and last self-renewing people are highly motivated and respect the sources of their energy and their motivation. They have the priceless quality of enthusiasm. They know how important it is to believe in what they are doing. I believe, said Gardner, that the individual can only achieve happiness and full moral stature if he has made commitments to something larger than his own little ego, spiritual commitments, commitments to loved ones, to one's fellow man, to a conception of moral order, and so forth.

The renewal of this nation, the renewal of the people who make it up, depends on the capacity for renewal in the individuals themselves. And that means you and me and the family next door. In concluding what he had to say, Gardner said this short paragraph. My first impulse is to wish you success. But success, as the world defines it, is too shallow a thing to last for very long. So I'm going to wish you some things that are very much harder to come by. Versatility, self-knowledge, the capacity to love. Who am I? Where am I? Where am I going? How do I get there? It's up to me whether or not I'm going to build mountains of blessing or mountains of cursing. I'm going to do that by setting goals in God, by renewing myself in the sense that David tells me that I ought because he learned the great secret. And then I have one of the most marvelous verses in all of scripture, and with that one I close. And you'll find it yourself also as one of the best-known verses in all of the scripture, Isaiah 40:31. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall Mount up with wings as Eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. Now I'll give you Lee's interpretation of the verse. I think that there are people who are so far along with the Lord that they shall Mount up with wings as Eagles. There are some that are not that far along, but they have come along and they shall run and not be weary. And there are some of us who are new. We've just started in the way of faith, and we shall be able to walk and not faint. Now it seems to me that we'll reverse that then. And as soon as I've learned to walk, I ask for the strength that I may run. And as soon as I have learned to run, I ask for the strength that I might Mount up with wings as Eagles, and those that do shall renew their strength.

Shall we pray? Our Father, we ask your understanding. We ask for the kind of work to be done in our lives. That need to be done. Help us to take charge. Knowing that we have the Holy Spirit, knowing that we have the presence of Christ, knowing that we have the resources of the Scriptures, and that we have reliance on prayer, we cannot imagine more that we need and that you will teach us the secret of this because you've said to work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling.

And that God gives us the privilege of doing it. We will find the energy, we'll find the love. We'll find the dedication. We'll find the willingness. We'll find the humility. We'll find everything that's necessary that we may renew ourselves in your name. We pray. Amen.