

A Word from Mack

RENEWAL: WHY WE MUST DO WHAT WE DO

Within my library I have four shelves filled with books which have challenged and guided my thinking over the last twenty years. They all have to do with civilization and society. Many of those books are true beacons lighting the way to a new future. But some are sober warning lights signaling the presence of dangers both dark and despairing.

At times the beacons shine on those shelves. Their titles, themselves, are enough to inspire all who would linger with them. They straighten you up and strengthen your resolve to dedicate yourself anew to the great causes of the human adventure. Those books become bugles sounding the reveille for a revolution of goodness to recast our world.

But at other times the titles that blink red warning lights dominate the library. On those days the bundle of books which recount and announce disaster in the experiments of living together in society read like a list of murders. It is almost as if they shout to the books of hope, "You are guilty of historical glibness in your hope for a new world. Be silent, therefore, in the face of reality."

Today, for me, the dark titles have stepped forward out of the line-up. Read them with me: Gibbon's seven volumes, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; Oswald Spengler's two volume work (1926,) *The Decline of the West*; Jacques Maritain's *The Twilight of Civilization* (1943); and the other titles, *The Lost City*; *Falling Apart*; *The Unconscious Civilization*; and *Collapse*. There are more – many more. But we all get the picture. There is a dark side of reality.

And that dark side is this: We keep building societies and they keep collapsing. That is the story of our human journey. We rise up only to fall down. And it happens over and over and over again. It would be comical, if only the consequences of decay and disintegration were not so horribly tragic. Smashed lives and dashed hopes are not just dry recitations of academic discourses. Nothing is more real than the suffering and tears of a little child.

Now I must tell you of my deepest conviction. It is precisely this sorrowful reality wrapped in human skin which is a clear call to action for everyone who cares. I believe that we have the capacity to stop forever the cycle of decay and collapse in our world. I believe that we also have within us the will to win our way forward to an entirely brand new future for our world. And I believe that we have at our hand the resources to construct a world where "justice will roll down like waters and right relationships like an ever flowing stream."

Yes, we have the possibilities around us for a new world for our children and their children. We even have the potential within us to make these possibilities become the dominate reality. But we will continue to fail over and over again at a cost too dear to contemplate unless we can confess that while we have the possibilities and the potential, we lack the power to remake our world on our own.

My friends, my deepest conviction is that the first step we must take if we are to see our way through to a new world is to fall on our knees. It is through this surrender that we will see the world won. Together our prayer must be, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven." We must fall and rise if we are to stop our

societies from rising and falling. We must fall to our knees and surrender ourselves to the Love of God, thus changing all within us. And we must then rise to our feet and march God's love into the streets of our cities to change all that there is around us.

And then the veil will be drawn back and we will hear, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" God bless you all. It is a great time to be alive. Come and join with us in community renewal.