



Heart Renovation

David Hearn, President of the C&MA in Canada

“I hate this house!” It slipped out with a velocity and intensity that caught me offguard. I had just shifted the broken soffit so I could repair it and next thing I knew I was wearing an entire bird’s nest as feathers, dirt, and dried grass fell into my hair, ran down my face, and into my shirt. “Ahhhh!” It was just one more setback and frustration in a growing list of repairs required in our new home.

As most of you know, Agnes and I purchased a fixer-upper and have been in renovation mode since the middle of August. The romantic picture of renovations depicted in various reality shows such as “Property Brothers”, “Love it or List it”, and “Holmes on Homes” has long since faded. The truth is that overnight transformations on a shoestring budget are far from reality. Renovations are frustrating, time consuming, and frequently overwhelming. This sounds a lot like spiritual renovations.

When Agnes and I first decided to buy a fixer-upper, my eldest daughter shared with me that she sensed God was going to renovate my heart as we renovated our new home. She was right. I have discovered parallels in what we are experiencing in our home renovations and what God is seeking to do in my heart.

Just like home renovations, heart renovations require the courageous demolition of spiritual barriers. As the official owners of our new home, it rapidly became clear that the

renovations required were not merely cosmetic in nature. This was going to be a knock-down and drag-out process.

Over time, the house became cluttered with more and more walls, barriers, and obstacles. The potential beauty and functionality of the home was diminished by blockages caused by years of neglect. So often the inner places of our hearts can become cluttered and dysfunctional. However, knocking these barriers down can be tricky, especially where unhealthy habits of thinking, being, and reacting have become firmly rooted. Old ways of coping, analyzing, and behaving may not budge easily because we have a tendency to cling to them. A barrier that became evident to me during this renovation was a high level of anger. My temper was short and my patience ran thin. Apologies were not enough...I needed to confront my internal unrest and be courageous enough to take a sledge hammer to it! With a repentant heart I apologized to my wife and asked God to renovate as needed.

But God wasn’t finished. Like renovations, He needed to go deeper, not just knocking down the walls, but revealing what lay behind them. Like home renovations, heart renovations reveal hidden cracks, hazards, and pending perils. Every time we knocked down a wall or opened up the ceiling in our home we discovered serious flaws and even dangerous compromises. Wiring that was like spaghetti with poor connections and make-shift solutions

and plumbing that was configured improperly with layers of decay that would eventually result in catastrophic failure. We ended up replacing everything. In our spiritual lives, it is easy to cover up or effectively hide the very issues that are short-circuiting our spiritual vitality and freedom. We compromise or create workarounds but it is only a matter of time before something bursts and we are exposed.

Underlying my anger was a faulty system of disappointment with God based on a level of entitlement. My thinking went like this, “I work hard to serve you Lord. I make lots of sacrifices. I pour out tonnes of energy; therefore, I am entitled to some breaks. It requires nothing of you God to ensure that all my renovations go smoothly without complications.” The result of my defective thinking was that, when complications arose, my anger increased due to my perception of God’s failure to reward my acts of service. Forgive me, Jesus!

Like home renovations, heart renovations rest on the timely intervention of outside help. Every ‘do-it-yourselfer’ experiences that humbling instance when they need to ask for help. I will never forget the moment, as I sat in a pile of rubble completely exhausted and overwhelmed, recognizing I was in way over my head, when I cried out, “Jesus, send an angel please. I need help.” A few minutes later there was a knock on the door. As I opened it, there stood my neighbour offering to assist. He is highly skilled in all the areas where I need help and has been a regular companion on this renovation journey since. He also was God’s reminder that I am not alone. Dallas Willard, in his book, *Renovation of the Heart*, describes spiritual

renovation like this, “Spiritual formation for the Christian basically refers to the Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself...The result is that the ‘outer’ life of the individual increasingly becomes a natural expression of the inner reality of Jesus and his teachings. Doing what he said and did increasingly becomes part of who we are.” (p.22, 159)

The *renovation of the heart* is a ‘Spirit-driven process.’ God is the ultimate renovator. He is always on time, completely prepared, and His work is of the highest quality. Paul describes it like this, “So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.” (2 Cor. 3:18 NLT) Only the Holy Spirit can change us; therefore, God calls us to an intimate relationship with Himself. Just like Moses in the Old Testament, who met with God and became radiant with His glory, we are invited into intimate communion with Jesus and are filled with the light of His Holy presence. The difference is that the glory of Moses was temporary and ours is eternal. It never fades. Our inner life becomes the life of Christ Himself! Now that’s renovation!

Do you have some walls that need to be knocked down or some faulty wiring that needs to be replaced? Please do not delay. Invite God into the deep places of your heart and surrender to Him. He will perfect His work in you!



The Christian and Missionary
Alliance in Canada

Global Advance Fund Update

The Global Advance Fund (GAF) covers the costs of sending and supporting international workers (IWs) overseas—salaries, benefits, and the costs associated with ministry in various countries. Some is also designated to training IWs.

Through the GAF, IWs take the Gospel to people groups, where few or none have heard the name of Jesus.

Year to date (as of October 31, 2020)

Total 2020 Faith Goal	\$16,067,161
YTD Income	\$10,421,181*
Excess/Shortfall	(5,645,980)

*64.86% of total 2020 Faith Goal