

**Saskatchewan Prayer Breakfast
Presentation by Dr. Lawrence Reimer
Wednesday April 11, 2018**

Your Honor, Distinguished Platform Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen –

Good morning.....

What a pleasure to be here this morning, the 48th Annual Prayer Breakfast, which started the year I graduated high school in 1971.

What a difficult past week this has been. I think it is very ironic that of all weeks in the year to have a prayer gathering, it is this week. I also think that of all the 48 Prayer Breakfasts, none before this will be as remembered as much as this one for the need for such an event.

We have had the terrible tragedy in Humboldt, and our province and country are hurting. I, personally, cannot remember a time that prayer has been mentioned so much in the public, from so many people.

The Dalai Lama once said, “If you don’t think little things make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito”.

Let’s start by asking ourselves, “When is the best time to plant a tree?”

The answer is, “About 30 years ago.”

“When is the second best time to plant a tree?”

That answer is, “Today!”

Today, I want to talk about some of the trees I planted years ago.

- On my first mission trip to Honduras, I did develop a passion for surgery and for those whom I served. I thrived on the gratitude these people gave me, which I didn’t feel I was getting in my work back home in Canada. So believe me, much like undertakers and police officers, and, yes, especially politicians, these professionals, like dentists, often get short-changed on receiving gratitude.

Regardless, I started extracting teeth on people, many of whom had never seen a dentist before (and probably haven’t since) and they *Loved* me, and I loved them back: me – a total stranger whom they had never seen before – different skin color, different language – people who trusted me, a total stranger, trusted me with their life.

- So, let's talk about three trees I planted years ago on my trips abroad. My three trees are the Subway Tree, the Tweezer Tree, and the Tree of Patience.

Tree number one: The Subway Tree:

We were working in a real building, this time in Ghana – a medical clinic we converted to a dental clinic. It was pretty upscale from what I was used to, with a roof, electricity, and a concrete floor. A lady came in and sat down in my chair mid-afternoon. She looked like she was near death. It turns out she had walked 1½ miles with no food or water, in the heat. Something looked wrong, so I had the doctor come over and have a look at her because it appeared that she was too weak to have anything done on her. The doctor said she would need an IV and some tests, but she had only a tiny amount of money, probably her last remaining few cents. They could not do the tests for everyone for free at this clinic. I offered to pay for her treatment. They took blood samples and put her on an IV. The tests showed she had Typhoid Fever and Stage 4 Malaria, in addition to her abscessed teeth. Here in Canada, not one of us would survive Stage 4 Malaria, let alone go for a 1½ mile walk with diarrhea, while extremely dehydrated, and running a fever in 100 degree heat to see a dentist. We gave her the meds and she came back in four days almost fully recovered. I removed her badly-abscessed teeth. The doctor gave me her medical bill which was \$10.00. I believe I saved her life for the price of a Submarine sandwich. I never *ever* have a sub, now, without thinking of her and that tree I planted. (See the photo of her on your table.) By the way, do you want to know what she said to me? It was rather Profound ... simply 2 words ... “Thank you.”

Tree number two: The Tweezer Tree:

We were in Africa again. The Chief requested that I pull a tooth of his first. I believe it was to show his trust in me and lead his tribe by example. So the interesting part, which no one knew except him and me, is that there was nothing wrong with the tooth. His people then thought I was a real doctor so they started bringing me non-dental patients. I was presented with a small baby girl with a bad ear. A small crowd gathered as I agreed to look at this baby. Now, ears are not my usual thing, but since the mother was desperate and there were *no lawyers there*, I thought I could at least have a look. Then, the most amazing thing happened. I took out a pair of tweezers and reached in her ear and pulled out a coffee bean. What had probably happened was that as the child was sleeping on her mother's back, with her head to the side, a bean probably came out of the basket her mother was

carrying on her head and fell into her ear. So Tree Number Two for me was a girl who grew up, able to hear from both ears, or didn't die because of a coffee bean.

A little background here – the people often sleep on the ground, and often bugs crawl into their ears. Since they don't have tweezers, they break off a straw from a grass broom to poke it out, and many times it breaks off and gets stuck in their ear, usually for good since they have no means to remove it.

Tree Number Three: The Patience Tree planted for me:

My final tree also was planted in Africa, at the end of a very difficult and trying day. People were fighting in the line-up because we were getting ready to leave and we could not see everyone. We were exhausted.

However, one gentle, kind lady was patiently waiting and had been all day. The rules were that female dentists worked on the women, and the male dentists worked on the men. Our lady dentist decided to see this lady as her last patient. Well, as usual, when you are tired and in a rush things do not go well. She spent 30 minutes trying to remove this lady's tooth and finally had to quit out of exhaustion. By this time, a lot of the helpers were already waiting on the bus anxious to go home. So I had to step in because we could not leave her. Long story made short is that I grabbed onto this tooth and pulled and pulled until out came a tooth attached to a golf ball-sized piece of jaw bone. The jaw was so completely involved it was amazing that separating the tooth did not break the jaw. Coincidentally, our pharmacist had the correct strong antibiotics necessary to clear the infection. So, in the midst of all the chaos, this lady was rewarded and probably lived because she was patient. What an example she set. We found out later that she had not slept through the night for over 4 years because of the pain.

So those are some of the trees I planted many years ago – really little things that I hope made some difference. Many such little things I cannot even remember. Thus the quote on the fridge magnet I have had placed at each place setting:

*Always give without remembering,
and always receive without forgetting.*

I often wish I could see how those people grew. So as I conclude, I want to challenge each of you to plant your **own** trees, starting today. This morning, at this Prayer Breakfast, here is my challenge for you today.

There are many public figures here. What we need to do is pray for some everyday people who are out there planting their trees, most often with very little gratitude. I want us to show them some appreciation and gratitude. I challenge you to send them each a note or just a card. Say what the Submarine Tree lady said to me, “Thank you”.

Then take it a step further and actually pray for them!!! This week especially, we need to pray for everyone involved in the tragedy in Humboldt, the leaders of our province and the leaders of our nation. Denzel Washington said, “Every night I put my slippers under my bed, so in the morning, I have to get on my knees to pray.”

This past week 80,000 “mosquitoes” raised \$6 million dollars to support the Humboldt Broncos. That is what can be done one mosquito at a time. Little things can add up.

Thank you to all of you for taking the time to support His Honor’s first Prayer Breakfast and coming out so early to see the dentist, especially those from out of town who came a great distance so early this morning. Thank you, Your Honor for this privilege to be here, to the Prayer Breakfast Committee for their trust in me. You put your lives in my hands. So, from me to you – Thank you!!

I leave you with this passage from Isaiah, chapter 26, verse 12:

*Lord, You will grant us peace,
for all we have accomplished is really from You.*