

# The Worry of a 6-Year-Old

Peter Marshall (1902 – 1949) was pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., and twice appointed as chaplain of the United States Senate.

Born in Scotland, he emigrated to New York in 1927, graduating from Columbia Theological Seminary. He died of a heart attack at the age of 46. His widow, Catherine Marshall, has published more than 220 books, including *A Man Called Peter*, a biography of her husband that was a popular success and adapted as a film of the same title.

In that biography of her husband, Ms. Marshall writes about the angst her son felt in moving from kindergarten to the first grade.

“Peter John was stunned to discover that something new had been added,” she said. “The first grade was no longer all play. He was expected to learn to read and write. He questioned us sharply about this not-too-welcome change.”

The boy’s father told him, “You might as well get used to it, Peter. You’ll have to go to school for a long time – 11 years, then 4 more years of college, then maybe more.”

Ms. Marshall said of her son’s reaction: “Peter looked crushed and went away disconsolate. It took him several weeks to get used to this new and awful revelation. He would be sitting on the floor playing with his wooden trains and blocks, apparently quite content, when suddenly his lower lip would begin to tremble, and tears would overflow. ‘Peter, what on earth is the matter?’ we would question. Between sobs he would say, ‘I’m worryin’ about when I’ll have to go to college.’”

Ms. Marshall felt her son’s behavior could reveal something about worry to all of us. She wrote, “The next time you start fretting about something, rather than trusting God to take care of it, remember that an all-wise God knows your worrying to be just as futile – just as silly – as our 6-year-old worrying about when he will go to college.”

Ms. Marshall is right. There are plenty of things for us in Life Care and Century Park to worry about, if we let ourselves.

I like the wisdom contained in a statement made by an elderly gentleman who said, “Guilt is concerned with the past. Worry is concerned about the future. Contentment enjoys the present while planning for the future.”

The Apostle Paul wrote: *Not that I am implying that I was in any personal want, for I have learned how to be content (satisfied to the point where I am not disturbed or disquieted) in whatever state I am* (Philippians 4:11 AMP).