

## A WORD FROM MACK

D. Elton Trueblood, one of the strident and stirring voices of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, once observed: “The greatest heresy of all is *to make small what God intended to be large.*” I believe him. I believe him because you and I must think large in order to stretch the possibilities of our lives. We must think as large as the planet upon which we dwell and which has been entrusted to us to make life as immense as the spirit which lives within each of us. Therefore, all of us must devote ourselves to the discipline of large thinking if we are not to fall prey to the trap of littleness.

But large thinking without purposeful living can easily degenerate into the addiction of mere dreaming. That is why Trueblood’s dictum must be tied to the analysis of life provided by another of the last century’s incisive prophets, Victor Frankl. In his autobiographical book, *Man’s Search For Meaning*, Dr. Frankl, an Austrian psychiatrist imprisoned for years in Auschwitz, shares the insight that gives large living the perspective which empowers us.

Frankl says that each life must cling to a crisp meaning that transcends us. It must be so clear to us that we can state our purpose in a single sentence. Then we must devote ourselves to daily deeds that can bring that purpose to pass. This daily action on our part aligns our lives with the large and grows us immeasurably. And finally, Frankl allows that when we have given ourselves to something larger than ourselves and prove that by daily obedience to our purposeful living, then we must find meaning in our suffering. Because we will suffer in this broken world as we seek to be faithful each day to the purpose of our life.

I am committed to the absolute conviction that we must align our lives with the highest and with the best that we can conceive. That is why we are utterly submitted to the rigor of living large with every one of you involved in the mission of Shreveport-Bossier Community Renewal. The experience of *finding* our calling is expansive beyond belief. And the exhilaration of actually *living* our calling is a captivity which has led to the greatest freedom we have ever known!

Let me share with you the process we use here at SBCR to align our daily lives with the transcendent cause which marches us out of our small thinking into a new universe of possibilities.

We start with the question: *What kind of world does God want?* You see, everything that we are and that we do must start with the biggest question we can ask about our planet. There is a river of meaning which flows from a Source. How tragic to live your life on the shore and miss the sweet flow of life intended to take us to a destiny beyond our imagining. The Hindu proverb that says, “A snail sees only its own shell, but thinks it is the grandest place in the universe!,” is the tragic commentary on too many lives that just look at their feet instead of the stars. *What kind of world does God want?* That question starts everything for us. And it leads to a second question.

*What kind of society makes possible that kind of world?* Once we have defined as cleanly as we can the kind of world our Creator desires, then we have to begin to describe in rigorous detail the kind of society that fulfills the creative hope of God. Think of the kind of community that sets in motion the necessary behavior to partner with God to birth the highest hope of life on our planet. Write down everything about that society which you can possibly describe. Your life targets now begin to take shape. And they will be large. Now go to the third question.

*What kind of person makes possible that kind of society?* Now, as the old saying goes, “We have stopped preaching and gone to meddling!” The mirror on the wall is inexorable in its reflection of the reality of our appearance. How can we have a selfless society filled with selfish people? If you live for this generation, how can you expect the world to be better in the next generation? As you answer this question, then begin to check yourself against your description for the needed personnel to build the society that will make the new world. Now you can see why I used the term, “rigor.” We have some corners of our lives to knock off if we would be true to a great cause. So the fourth question comes.

*What kind of environment makes possible that kind of person?* This question defines the parameters of our mission here at SBCR! We must clearly apprehend the necessary conditions which together make possible the optimum environment for growing the highest and the best that we can in human living. And, of course, we believe that this is only possible by incarnating the love of God in community. And finally, the question which defines the practical work of our mission follows:

*What must we **do** to make possible that kind of environment?* The daily work of SBCR is to follow a very detailed strategy to create that kind of environment which can produce that kind of person necessary to people that kind of society which can make that kind of world that God wants.

Day by day more and more of us are joining in the real march of living large with dedicated purpose. We call it, "Renewal." Nothing is more renewing. And how great it is to live it with you!!