

## A Word from Mack

Life teaches us to have a bigger purpose

Do you know, I think the very stones would cry out if I failed to tell you, “Thank you!!” Your response to the surprise challenge our team pulled off for my sixty-fifth birthday has just rocked me back on my heels. I could not have thought of a greater entrance onto to the stage of Medicare than to be escorted by the strong arms of your stupendous notes of love and encouragement which you sent with your gifts for my life cause.

So far, over \$80,000 has been received for the work of Community Renewal International. And more is still coming as I write to you! I am genuinely humbled while at the same time I feel immensely strengthened for the journey that lies ahead. I am told that a matching gift is just over the horizon as a final determination awaits for a reluctant closing of the birthday “gates” idea. What a trip! Thank you!

Sixty-five years old. How strange is this phenomenon we call “time.” There are so many ways to view this precious jewel of time. For some, it is excruciatingly slow. “The grasshopper drags himself along,” it says in Ecclesiastes. We can be in circumstances that are so painful that time seems interminable, never ending. And then time drags like fingernails screeching on a blackboard.

I remember a good friend of mine who won legendary lore status by his “commencement” remarks at the age of 12. The year was 1956 and South Highland’s Elementary School was holding its final assembly of the year in honor of its sixth grade “graduates.” As each child squeaked the praise and wonder of going on, Stuart Madison got to the mike, and in an exhausted and somber voice, funeralized, “I’ve been here six long years.” Time can drag.

But we also know that time can be a zephyr. What were the words? “It seems a long time from May to December, but the days get short when you reach September.” Sixty-five years of riding on clouds and wash-outs in the Spring. Sixty-five long years...and it seems like yesterday! My jogging/walk path takes me down East Fairview. I go past the house where I was brought home a newborn from Schumpert Hospital in 1945. I knew no other home or street until I married. Each time I go down that street now, I remember and recall my 22 neighbor families and all of the kids. Time is a vapor.

Time can also be a thief. It doesn’t usually assault us on our way to life. No, time silently, stealthily embezzles the company’s assets, until we wake up one day and ask, “What happened? Where did it all go?” That horror gives content to my understanding of hell. And I think of that apocryphal story of the gathering of all the demons to plot how to continue to dupe we poor humans. One said, “Let’s tell them there is no God.” “No,” the others rejoined, “they won’t fall

for that.” “Then,” said another, “let’s tell them there is no Devil.” Again, negative murmuring until one blurted, “Let’s tell them, there is no hurry!” Gavel down! Done! Time can be a thief.

But I have found that time, rightly used, is elixir! I know that there is a reality that, when appropriated, brings to each moment whether happy or sad, joy. Unspeakable joy. This is the reality we call “love.” Love found the psychiatrist Victor Frankl in the middle of Auschwitz, to bring him to the depth and height of life’s meaning and it transformed those horrid, dragging moments of inexpressible thievery into exquisite and ironic joy. And from that experience, he was birthed to write, *Man’s Search for Meaning*.

Time will let you use it to be the “bush that burns but is not consumed.” Frankl said it most simply: Have a purpose that is bigger and better than you to live for. Do deeds each day to lead to the fulfillment of that purpose. And to find meaning in your suffering. When you do this, especially for love, then even “the years that the locusts have eaten will be restored,” says the Lord.

Our mission is to partner together to make our world a home where every single child is safe and loved. And there is time enough to do it. Caring alone cannot cure our world, but caring together can! Thank you for your partnership in this high cause and calling.