

A Word from Mack

Mack McCarter

Greatest adventure is in our hands

Most men crave adventure. And that craving is in our bones and it is what makes our blood run hot. From the ancient stirrings within us, as Carl Jung, the pioneer of psychological origins theory observed, to the poetic musings of Rudyard Kipling's *The Explorer*, the evidence is in on our craving.

Something's hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges.

Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!

And if you want to mobilize men, then you must get to this tap root within their souls and activate that will-to-adventure which lies so deep. That is what the eminent psychiatrist, Paul Tournier, said almost 50 years ago, and which he documented in his book, *The Adventures of Living*: "The impulse to adventure, in the male, is so close to instinctual, that it must be considered as part of his psychological persona."

Tournier, in his best Swiss observations, underlines the old adage, "We are not here just to hold the fort, but to storm the heights!" He points out that men will buy motorcycles at 50, risk business at 70, pursue sports rabidly, and just get generally crazy all for the love of adventure. He also points out that the love of adventure is not the exclusive property of just males, but he gives ample evidence that the man is particularly susceptible to the power of adventure as a primary driving force in his life.

I have to admit that seeing and seizing the challenges of life drive me unmercifully. Maybe I should rather say, "mercifully," because this journey constantly evokes unspeakable joy in the midst of sometimes harsh struggle! That's how one of my heroes, Dr. Wilfred Grenfell, saw it too.

In the late 1800s he gave up a lucrative medical practice in London to go as a medical missionary to Labrador at the call of Dwight L. Moody, the famous evangelist. Grenfell won such fame, he was invited by Harvard University in 1911 to deliver the prestigious William Beldon Noble Lectures for that year. Grenfell's lectures rocked the campus and beyond. He titled them, *The Adventure of Life*. (One of my prized possessions is the first edition book of those lectures.)

New here is the key point. He dedicated those lectures to his wife. Remember that salient point as you read the next few paragraphs.

Being a man of adventure, I was simply nonchalant over the birth of our first grandchild in 2002. Please don't be hard on me, family is wonderful, but adventure is intoxicatingly addictive! So word came about that the birth of a granddaughter, Katherine Elise McCarter. I was in D.C. at the time. Champagne was broken out when the call came. I toasted her arrival. I wasn't upset about growing old, and I wasn't swinging from the chandelier either. I was simply nonchalant. This is life. One chapter ends; a new chapter begins.

I honestly thought that the folks who had the bumper stickers, "Ask Me About My Grandchild," were kind of nutty. And I was always careful NOT to ask about grandchildren because from nowhere

might appear an entire photo album of some pink nondescript baby and they all looked the same. Not me. It is wonderful but there are causes to claim, mountains to climb. That was me, then...

I flew home in time to go to the hospital to see the baby. In the new mother and dad's room, the family had gathered. My son didn't waste a second: "Dad would you like to hold her?" I don't know why, but I didn't expect that. He was the last baby I had held -31 years before! I was suddenly petrified. But how could I say, "Nah, I'll wait." So he gave her to me.

David and Kelli just placed in my arms the most precious gift: their child. I went all weak and watery immediately. I cannot describe for you the rush of feeling and the instantaneous melding of my heart to my dear "Katie." (I am the only one with permission to call her that name.) She was so fragile, so helpless, so beautiful, and something fused inside of me.

I walked with that little baby girl over to a corner of the room. And suddenly that corner became an altar. Here I made a covenant with "Katie." I told her that I would dedicate every fiber of my being, all of my energy, all of my thinking, all of my treasure, and all of my sparse talents to make the world she would inherit safe and loving for her. How could she do it? She was so dependent, so helpless, so in MY arms, so in MY responsibility.

I can't explain it other than to say, "On that day my resolve turned into steel." And all of my study, and all of my work, and all of my philosophical speculations boiled into a remarkably clear and simple meaning for my life and I believe for yours: "We are here to partner with God and one another to make our world a home where every single child is safe and loved." You see, I have grown.

It isn't enough for me to just look out for my own. I must covenant with your child and grandchild. I must dedicate myself to every single child. Isn't that the old reason, the true purpose now lost, I fear, for placing babies in the arms of our politicians? We hand them the most precious gift we can and in effect say to them, "Guard this child. Make our world safe. Lead us to do this." Now it's just another photo-op. But the symbol is profoundly powerful.

So when I go to the neighborhoods, poor and rich, I look for babies to hold. I hold them and I promise them, so beautiful, so precious, what I promised my "Katie."

And here is what I know. I know that there is no greater challenge to a real man then to devote all that we are to making this world a home for our wives, our children, and yes, our fabulous grandchildren. Now I know what the Angel meant when he told Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, "And he shall turn the hearts of fathers to their children."

Dear friends, we must do more than "hold the fort." We must storm the heights of renewing our world!