

The Last year of My Life Part 3

This is the third “Last Year of My Life” letter. I almost blew it this morning by thinking, “What, I’ve got to write another letter?” Whoops excuse me Lord, I am still here. Thanks. Scripture is very clear that we make our plans but God ordains. We all know what 2020 has been like, but each of us will take something different from the experience.

I believe that there are at least four things we all share.

1. We got to see our house close up. (Needs paint, cleaning, fix a dripping faucet or whatever.)
2. We missed corporate worship. (Taking communion at home with beer and pretzels just isn’t the same.)
3. We missed each other. Phone and zoom are nice but not the same either.
4. We missed normalcy – whatever that is.

Then I began to count the differences and the blessings of the time. We went to stay with our son for a week – and three months later we were still there. We were quarantined not only in the States but out of El Salvador. The airport and the borders were closed. This was the first time in a long time (maybe since childhood) that life plans were out of my hands. Occupy became a real command. Occupy the time, the occasion, the place. Kind of lived in the moment. Yes, we were still training teachers on-line and there was work to do but it was under a different “clock.”

Eventually, I found a footing to concentrate on our accreditation project – the kind of interminable paperwork we all hate but after weeks and months (well actually we started in December 2018) it was finished.

When the lockdown sort of lifted I took Barbara to visit five of her six siblings. Given the times and their ages if you didn’t see them now you might never. People are important. We spent two months on the road (or actually in the air) from one coast to the other. People ask, “Weren’t you afraid?” Wash your hands, wear your mask, don’t cough on anybody and OH, don’t talk back to your spouse you will have a good chance to live a long time. But the biggest determination is the absolute trust in God’s plan for our life. When He says go – you go. The final question for now is if you arrive in heaven is God going to say, “Oh, I wasn’t expecting you.” Remembering Phil. 1:21 “To live is Christ and to die is gain.”

My biggest take away from this year was the feeling of not hurrying – there was no place to hurry to. Yes, there are deadlines and responsibilities and planes to catch and if you miss one – life will still go on. What a gift not to be consumed with “hurry.”

Since today I am already starting the next, next last year of my life I will remember the lessons of this year and the lessons of the year before that and the one before that when I began to intentionally make room for people who need encouragement. How do I know they need encouragement? I look in the mirror and I see “us.” People come into our life to be encouraged or to be an encouragement, either way God sent them.

Well, this young idealist still has a world to reach for God through Christian Montessori training. The opportunities are expanding from coast to coast and continent to continent. The other day reading Joshua 14, I came across the words of Caleb, , “I was forty years old when I walked the promised land but it was the fear of my brothers that prevented us from moving forward. I am now 85 and am as

strong and as vigorous to go out to battle as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day." I am not 85 just 74 today (and occasionally may need a nap) but when the Lord involved us with Christian Montessori we had no idea how amazing it would be. We had a small vision of having a Christian Montessori school. A dozen years later we started the Christian Montessori Fellowship to network Christians in Montessori, holding a conference every year since. We began to do regional conferences in 2002. When we went to Shreveport, LA to Christian Center School they spoke seemingly prophetic words over us that we should train teachers. Personally, we thought they were crazy. 😊 We were not going to train teachers. No. No. Within a half dozen years we had begun the process of teaching teachers. And now the process is being refined and expanded. And that simple vision of starting a school for our children has become a vision to bless all the children of the world. The prophet Joel says, "Your young men will see visions ..." So therefore, I must be classified with the young men. I still may need that nap today. (Have to save up energy to blow out all those candles.)

The blessing of life is to be able to bless others and all of you have blessed us by your friendship, prayers and support. I want to make the "last" year of my life full of blessings to give away.