

**December 17, 2010**

***“Echoes of the Heart”***

*Reflections on Life and Community Living*

Contact Dr. Frantz on the web at [www.mlcchurch.com](http://www.mlcchurch.com)

**A sense of urgency.** Life matters. Your lives matter. In these days of our lives—in the celebration of our religious holy days and in anticipation of the New Year that lies ahead—we are reminded of this in personal and poignant ways. More still, we are reminded there is only so much time and, because of this, there is a *sense of urgency* to our lives.

In sports (basketball and football come to mind), with two or three minutes left in a game, television announcers are always reminding us: *plenty of time ...no need to panic*. There are times, of course, when this may well be the case; but often times, it is not the case at all. In fact, not infrequently, the game is 99% lost and much of the reason is because the losing team didn't play with a sufficient *sense of urgency* soon enough in the game.

The point is there are times in our lives when we need to feel a *sense of urgency*. We see this frequently in business ventures when we need to know when to push the *right* buttons. It also applies to our relationships when, for example, a family needs to do an intervention for a loved one lost in the darkness of some addiction.

The point, again: life matters. Love matters. What we do or do not do today matters.

**Stuff matters.** One December afternoon, a group of parents stood in the lobby of a nursery school waiting to claim their children after the last pre-Christmas class session.

As the youngsters ran from their lockers, each one carried in his hands *the surprise*, a brightly wrapped present on which he had been working diligently for weeks.

One small boy, trying to run, put on his coat, and wave to his parents—all at the same time—suddenly slipped and fell. *The surprise* flew from his grasp, landed on the floor and broke with an obvious ceramic crash. Ouch!

Stunned by this series of events, the child began to cry inconsolably. His father, trying to minimize the incident and comfort the boy, patted his head and murmured, *Now, now, that's alright, son. It's doesn't matter. It's okay. It doesn't matter.*

But the child's mother, somewhat wiser in such situations, swept the boy into her arms and said, *Oh, but it does matter. It matters so very much.* And she wept with her son as she consoled him.

This story prompts the question: is there anything in our lives about which we feel a *sense of urgency*? A sense that we need to make this moment, this day, this occasion or this opportunity, count.

The truth of our lives is that there are things we ought to be deeply concerned about—things that ought to stir us to a passionate response. Why? Because life matters; and love matters; and we only have so much time in this life.

**Family love and the holy days.** Family gatherings around the holy days of Christmas or Hanukkah are times like no other. Because of our traditions and our expectations of the season, the love shared during these days has a unique power to touch our hearts.

The personal warmth and feelings of the season draw us in. Together, around this blending of tradition, expectation and family gatherings, joy and happiness rise up in our spirit like at no other time.

About all of this, a *sense of urgency* is a good thing. In my family, every year, excitement builds as Christmas approaches. Memories from childhood transmute into new memories in marriage and with children; and now, with grandchildren. At their best, these are the best days of our lives. They are what we live for—what we plan for, anticipate and look forward to.

A *sense of urgency* about this special time of year helps us prioritize in our preparation. When we remember the significance of the moment, we pay attention and get organized. We do what we need to do and take care of what needs taking care of ... and we sleep better along the way.

All that remains is to *stop and smell the roses*. There comes a time when we have to stand back from our busyness and give ourselves to the moment—to the moments of family love and togetherness. No matter the current picture of our family, no matter our ups and downs along the way, we have much to celebrate.