

“Echoes of the Heart”

Reflections on Life and Community Living

Contact Dr. Frantz on the web at www.mlcchurch.com

Destination: the other side of the financial crisis. With the holiday season in full bloom and the New Year soon to break through, still, the global financial crisis remains the number one story. Everywhere, it’s got people talking.

What’s both curious and alarming about our economic woes is that nobody really knows what to do. Still, I have no doubt that over the next few years, if not sooner, we’ll find our way to the *other side*. Nonetheless, for the moment, it makes us nervous. What does it all mean?

And on a more personal front, for all of us, how secure are our jobs, to say nothing of our retirement and our savings?

As I write, the stock market has just gone through its second strongest two-day showing since 1987, with a rise of well over 800 points in the Dow Jones industrial average. Apparently the two-day spike is related to President-elect Obama’s selection of Timothy Geithner as Secretary of the Treasury along with the buzz about the economic team he is assembling.

The point is: already, with sound decision making and creative thinking, a new spirit is in the air ... along with the expectation that, over time, good news will follow.

For our part, all we can do is be patient and hold fast to the hope that we’ve placed our trust in the right leadership at the top. One of the keys in all of this will be to document the details of our learning process so this sort of economic melt down is not repeated some years down the road.

Lessons to be learned. An important sign post of these times are the *lessons to be learned*. Certainly, there are many. Pundits of the economy thought we’d learned some things in the Great Depression. Personally, I’ve been told and have read—over and again—that adequate safety measures had been in place since the thirties and forties.

Regrettably, what we were unable to control were the arrogance and recklessness of runaway greed. From Wall Street to Main Street, too many people spent too much time gloating in their profits with only scant regard for the possible consequences.

Amazingly, anticipating consequences is not something our American culture is very good at. Too easily, we get all caught up in the immediacy of the moment—in what’s been called *the pleasure of now*. Dating back to the prosperity impulses of the ‘80’s, immediate gratification continues to be all the craze.

In sports, in politics, in our relationships, we become obsessed, almost, with the short-term. We want to win, *now* ... make an impression on the voter, *now* ... feel loved in the relationship, *now*.

Another lesson to be learned is that when something (a business deal or an investment opportunity) sounds too good to be true, most of the time *it is* too good to be true. Very seldom in this life is there any *free lunch*, a metaphor for instant earnings and easy money. Still, in many of us, there's a die-hard eagerness to believe that, somehow, the stars are aligned in our favor.

Holding fast to the hope. Although the toughest days of our economic struggle may well be before us, still, good news is on the way. It has to be; because *the night cannot forever hold back the dawn*. Always, God is on the move and new energy and new light are bursting to break through.

Periods of discouragement and deprivation are often the breeding ground for imagination and creativity that lead to good times and better days. We walk through the valley, to be sure; but the ascent up the mountain is never too far away.

These days are a poignant reminder how *we're all in this life together*. They call out of us a humility and gratitude that, over the months—even years—strengthen our resolve as they fortify our character.

Again, we'll make it to the other side; and hopefully we'll arrive with a more evolved sense of what it means to be citizens in an increasingly global community.