Good News for a Change! Touching Your Heart Increasing Your Hope

Mort Crim
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While directed toward Christians, Good News will resonate with Jews, Muslims and other faiths. In short essays, Crim, a veteran broadcaster who spent nearly twenty years editing and anchoring television news in Detroit, tells readers to live purposefully and serve others, instead of marking time and looking out for oneself; to overcome obstacles with action, not excuse; to practice what one preaches.

Crim's not the first to touch on these themes, and some of his examples echo others. In one essay he tells the story of a woman who decides to commit suicide by drowning. Someone overcome with the desire to save her forgets he doesn't know how to swim himself. The woman winds up saving her would-be rescuer and realizing her life does have purpose. In another essay, reflecting on how to keep one's sanity in a crazy world, Crim comes to the conclusion that the bowl of life "contains both cherries and pits."

Other essays, however, contain fresh examples. In one, Crim uses his tendency to overpack while traveling as a metaphor for filling one's days. People tend to cram too much in, he says. "When filling your suitcase or your calendar, ask this question about each item: "What's the worst thing that may happen if I leave it out? An honest answer will allow you to travel through life a lot lighter."

In a couple of essays, Crim expresses distaste for how Christian concepts have been co-opted, and often corrupted, by politicians. "Our task as Christians…includes feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and caring for the ill. This is not a question of political philosophy. It is not a question of competing systems of government. For the Christian, it is a question of the gospel's concern for people. What do we care about most? Programs? Property? Or people?" These essays stand out because they articulate a view the reader can chew on, rather than something they merely can agree with and turn the page.

Each essay is paired with at least two quotations matched to its theme. This quotation collection is among Good News' finest points. Sources vary from the Bible; actor John Wayne, whose comment, "Courage is being scared to death and saddling up anyway," prefaces an essay on courage; and country music lyrics, for example, "What part of the word "no" don't you understand?" precedes an essay on the dangers of an overextended life. Jesus was the first to tell the good news that gave his followers hope and soul-sustenance. With His teachings, He showed that simple points and morals don't have to be trite. That's a tough act to follow, but Crim genuinely tries to do the same.

CARI NOGA (September / October 1999)

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