



# REFLECTIONS

January 1, 2017

**Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.  
...and he gives [spiritual gifts] to each one, just as he determines.**

*1 Corinthians 12:7, 11*

## Road Ahead

The way looked clear though the forecast carried warnings. But the road ahead had some surprises in store. Ice, snow, jackknifed trucks and overturned cars halted traffic for hours. Too late were turnaround chances. Once begun, turning back became no option. All attention turned to the road ahead.

The recent travel experience prompted thoughts about the road of life. Once begun there's no turning back. Except in memories, most of us would rather not relive the road behind anyway. Ambitions don't reside there. The road ahead is the gateway to the meaning of our lives. Some call it the vision we have.

My philosophy may not be shared by many, but I think most decisions we make are rooted in a vision—an outcome we seek. Each decision either advances toward it, or defends against an obstacle in the way of it. Oh, most of us take a few diversionary trips into temptations that throw us off course, and maybe we become disoriented from time to time. But deep down we live in pursuit of something that will make a mark on the world—a mark that will define our lives on earth.

So, what is your mark? And where do you stand in relation to it? Now is a good time to take stock. God placed you in this world for a reason. And he equipped you with all the tools you need to fulfill it. Just look back down the road just traveled. Relive significant events that brought you to this point in your life. Note the turning points that shaped your course, and give special attention to what brought true joy to you and others along the way? Doesn't it make sense that joy is God's reward for serving his purpose for your life? And it seems likely that joy came from the gifts and talents God gave you.

*So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us. If our gift is to speak God's message, we should do it according to the faith that we have; if it is to serve, we should serve; if it is to teach, we should teach; if it is to encourage others, we should do so. Whoever shares with others should do it generously; whoever has authority should work hard; whoever shows kindness to others should do it cheerfully.* (Romans 12:6-8 TEV)

It's a New Year. All attention to the road ahead. Surely it has some surprises in store. But it will present opportunities too—

Opportunities for your spiritual gifts to make a mark on the world.

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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