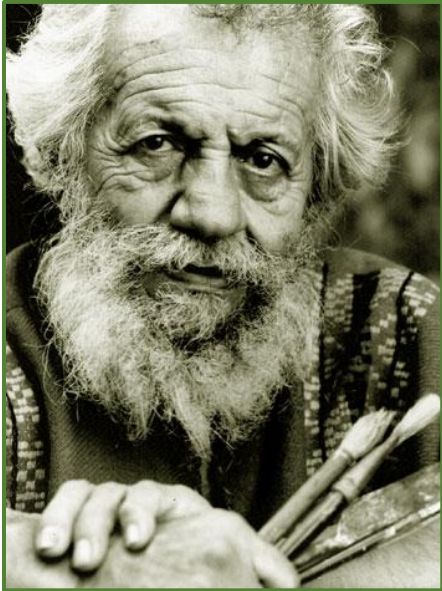


Tragic Death of a Child



In his book *The Quest for Character*, Dr. Charles Swindoll – senior pastor of Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas, and chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary – recounts the story of famed mural artist J.H. Zorthian, who read about a small boy who had been killed in traffic.

He had murals hanging in more than 40 public buildings across the country, but following the death of the child, he could not concentrate on his work.

“His stomach churned as he thought of that ever happening to one of his three children,” Swindoll said. “His worry became an inescapable anxiety. The more he imagined such a tragedy, the more fearful he became. His effectiveness as an artist was put on hold once he started running scared. At last, he

surrendered to his obsession. Canceling his negotiations to purchase a large house in busy Pasadena, California, he began to seek a place where his children would be safe.”

Seeking to find just the right property, Zorthian tried to imagine the danger in everything – the property, its proximity to traffic, its vulnerability to trespass and exposure to environmental dangers were all seriously considered. Once a “safe” plot of land was secured, he began planning his house.

“With meticulous care, he blended beauty and safety into the place,” Swindoll wrote. “He put into it various shades of the designs he had concentrated in the murals he had created. Only this time, his objective was more than colorful art; most of all, it had to be safe and secure. He made sure of that.”

Finally, the garage was built. Only one automobile ever drove into that garage – Zorthian’s. He stood back and surveyed every possibility of danger to his children. He could think of only one remaining hazard. He had to back out of the garage. He might, in some hurried moment, back over one of his children.

He immediately made plans for a protected turnaround. The contractor returned and set the forms for that additional area, but before the cement could be poured, a downpour stopped the project. It was the first rainfall in many weeks of a long West Coast drought. If it had not rained that week, the concrete turnaround would have been completed and in use by Sunday.

(more)

That was Feb. 9, 1947 – the day his 18-month-old son, Tiran, squirmed away from his sister’s grasp and ran behind the car as Zorthian drove it from the garage. The child was killed instantly.

What is the lesson for us?

Try as we may, we can’t remove the risk from life. Much of what we experience during our time here on earth will always remain just beyond our ability to control. But although life is precarious, we can find the safety and security we desire in the life to follow.

Everything we commit to God in this life is secured for the life that really matters. And the work we do for others – including our calling in Life Care and Century Park – has eternal significance. We are laying up treasures in heaven.

The Bible is clear about it. Jesus is speaking: *Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal* (Matthew 6:19-20 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter