

# LIVING LIFE BACKWARDS

Abundance  
CANADA



# Table of Contents

## Introduction

If You Could Live Your Life Over Again.....	1
Abundant Living .....	2

## Reflect More

A Family Ministry .....	4
Sharing a Legacy of Storytelling .....	5
What I Wish We Had Talked About .....	6
Gratitude Journal .....	7

## Risk More

Calculated Risk .....	8
Finding a New Community .....	9
Finding Freedom .....	9
Integrating Generations .....	10
Living in Contentment .....	11

## Respond More

Answering the Call .....	12
A Mindset of Generosity .....	13
Enriched by the Journey .....	13
Opportunities Through Succession .....	14
Planning for Transition .....	15

## Summary

Living Generously .....	16
-------------------------	----

## Living Life Backwards

Copyright © 2013 Abundance Canada. All rights reserved. Second Edition, 2016.

The contents of this book may be used freely in study sessions, workshops and seminars. Please identify Abundance Canada as the source and copyright holder of this publication. For additional copies please contact Abundance Canada at 12-1325 Markham Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 4J6.

Design by Wendy Koch

**Printed in Canada by Premier Printing Ltd.**

1.800.772.3257 | abundance.ca | winnipeg@abundance.ca

# If You Could Live Your Life Over Again...



*“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”*

—H. Jackson Brown, Jr

Tony Campolo, the popular American commentator on spiritual and social issues, cites a survey where fifty people aged 95 and older were asked what they would do differently if they could live their lives over again. Their responses can be grouped into three common themes:

*They would take more time for reflection.*

*They would risk more.*

*They would do more things that would live on after their death; they would be more intentional about building a legacy.*

Of course, some have made conscious decisions to reflect, risk, or respond in ways that might significantly influence their legacy. Campolo refers to this as living life backwards—seeing the desired end result and charting a path to achieve your goals.

Individuals who share this commitment are at the heart of the stories that follow—stories about people who live among us (and many of these are Abundance Canada clients). Stories that are inspiring because they reveal how, even when our lives might be full of challenges, people like us can find ways to reflect more, risk more, and respond to opportunity in ways that can make a lasting difference.

# Abundant Living

by John and Anne Neufeld with adaptations from *Say Yes to the Calendar: Aging and Mortality*

*“I have come that they may have life and have it to the full, abundantly.” John 10:10*



John and Anne Neufeld

What did Jesus have in mind when he said: “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full, abundantly” in John 10:10?

The abundant life he spoke of might refer to right relationships with God, self, and others as in Matthew 22:34-40. It could refer to the prime dimensions of life—the physical, the relational, the social, and the spiritual—and having these in balance.

*Don't retire from something but rather retire to something.*

Reflecting on abundant living seems to take on special meaning when we consider the shape of our retirement years. The last third of life can look as threatening as some

of the spies sent to explore the promised land experienced in Numbers 13: “We went into the land ... and it does flow with milk and honey. But the people who live there are powerful and the cities are fortified and very large.”

We would like to believe that each of us has a hand in shaping how we will enter this land—how we will be as we get older, what we will become as we age. We carry considerable personal responsibility for the shape of our retirement years.

Aging shapes us (reshapes, misshapes, bends us out of shape), but we also shape our own aging. To live abundantly, we need to give attention to some of these questions: What are the goals, the images, the hopes we have for our last years or decades? Let's develop a sense of intentionality and purpose. Let's be proactive, not merely reactive.

Those of us entering or already in this land of retirement need to be creative and remain productive both in society and in church. Life is not over when we retire. Our life must be reconstructed or we will be bored with it. We need to be involved in something of significance, to serve some compelling cause. We need to develop latent talents—painting, crafts, music, volunteering, etc. Recently, a friend of ours remarked, “Retirement should be redefined as re-investment in some pursuit.” Indeed.

As we enter this new land, let's not forget to say hello to joy, to friendship, to companionship, to laughter and celebration, and to new experiences. Let's say hello to freedom from competition in the work world and daily schedules. Let's say hello to the opportunity to mentor younger persons, the opportunity to give back to society the lessons and resources and experiences we have harvested over a lifetime.

Katie Funk Wiebe, in her memoir *Border Crossing: A Spiritual Journey*, says, “Crafting one's life means

remaining an interesting person because you are interested in others and in the shape your life is taking.” She emphasizes that even in the losses we encounter we can choose our attitudes. “We are also free to accept each moment as a challenge to forgive, to love, to accept God’s daily grace,” she writes.

“Living by faith we will be able to step not into certainty but into the uncertainty of the unknown with the assurance of God’s daily presence.”

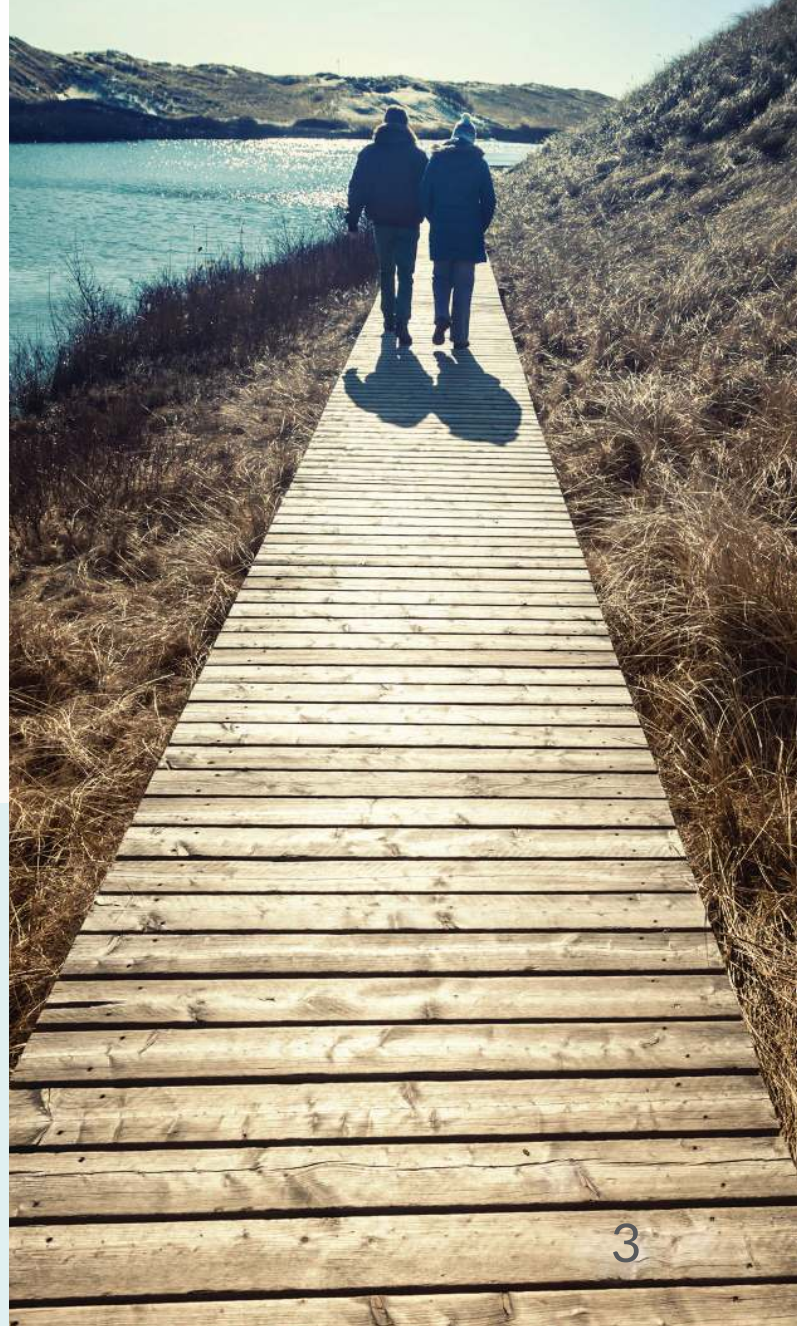
We can live abundantly, as Jesus desired for us, because we are interested in others, and in the world, and in the shape our own lives are taking. We have choices to make as we craft our lives from this day forward. Let’s enjoy life!

Let’s do whatever health and circumstances permit us to do. Let’s rejoice in the gift of life each day.

Abundance Canada has four decades of experience assisting people to live abundantly through generosity.

Find out more at [abundance.ca](http://abundance.ca) or call us with your generosity dreams at 1.800.772.3257.

*What image of abundant living can help shape your retirement years? How might you be able to say hello to generosity in this phase of your life?*



## A Family Ministry



Peter and Pearl Gibbins

After his twenty years as pastor at Hanover Evangelical Missionary Church, Peter Gibbins and his wife Pearl, who was also involved in the ministry,

moved in with their daughter and son-in-law and their four children, ages 4, 6, 8 and 10. “My dad, who had a long career as a minister, didn’t like the word retirement,” Pearl says. “Dad said there is no such word in the Bible. He believed retirement meant looking for another ministry that you could handle at an advanced age, even if you had limitations. We feel like our new ministry is here with children and grandchildren.”

*How are you imprinting your legacy on the hearts of those you love?*

“I’m still trying to get accustomed to the noise,” Pearl says, with a grin. “And it took some getting used to the fact that the kids are always in and out of our space. But when we see the impact we can have on our grandchildren’s lives, it’s worth it.”

Peter and Pearl never planned on this living arrangement. As they approached retirement age, they paid off their mortgage and updated their home (roof, furnace, appliances) in preparation for living on their pensions. But when their son-in-law and daughter invited them to move in, the Gibbins felt God was leading them.

“In our small group at church, we had just finished discussing a book that explores the different roles

grandparents can play in their grandchildren’s lives,” Peter says. “So we finish the book discussion and then our son-in-law calls with this invitation. We felt like it was natural to consider it.”

Living together means eating together, dividing household chores, and sharing expenses. But it also means that grandparents are usually available to put the kids to bed and pray with them and even to have some of the conversations parents aren’t always able to have.

“You realize that when you were parenting,” Pearl reflects, “you were often so involved in the day-to-day nitty gritty that you found it hard to take a step back and have discussions with the kids or to take time for other things. That’s what grandparents can do.”

Both Peter and Pearl caution that the arrangement they enjoy isn’t for everyone. Their prior relationship with their daughter and her family made this invitation attractive and the arrangement viable. They didn’t move in until they had worked out some ground rules regarding chores, expenses, and living space. They maintain existing separate ties outside the family—such as attending different churches—to help preserve their own sense of identity. Even with all the planning, this extended family accepted this as part of their faith journey. After nearly three years, everyone involved agrees it’s working, and it’s beneficial all around.

“The bottom line here is that we’re doing this for the next generation,” says Pearl. “Our legacy is being imprinted on their hearts.”

# Sharing a Legacy of Storytelling

by Dorothy M. Peters



Dorothy M. Peters with granddaughter Livia

“When someone has broken hands, I could drive them in a car,” said my red-haired granddaughter, Livia, on the night before she turned five.

“When someone has broken feet, I could carry them home.”

This was a “holy ground, take-off-my-shoes” moment for me. While tucking Livia into bed, I had merely asked her what she might do when she was five, thinking she might respond with kindergarten or a bike without its training wheels. Instead, God revealed his heart to me that night, through this fiercely hopeful little girl. “When someone has no voice, Grandma, I could talk for them.” Since Livia was born, I had been preoccupied in the “ivory tower” of graduate study and dissertation writing. But her words now flamed up within me a yearning for a half-remembered, half-forgotten call from God.

“Where do we find someone who is broken?” Livia asked the next week. We wrote to friends working

with a Guatemalan village school, where Livia had lived with her parents when she was a baby. These friends told us of a little girl, deaf and mute, who showed up at school one day and just kept coming. Ill equipped to help her learn, they wondered what to do. Naturally, my husband and I sponsored her and a sign-language teacher was found. This was a double joy for us for it also meant that our granddaughter would know that because she spoke up, a little brown-haired girl in Guatemala had found her voice.

Five years later, at a time when Livia needed to remember who she was, I invited her to write with me, to restore her words to her and reshape them into a book we named *Tomorrow When I’m Big*. Illustrator Lynda Rogac is now painting joyful pictures of both Guatemalan and Canadian children, each with differing abilities, playing together and helping one another. “Could she put Jesus in every picture?” Livia asked one day. “But as a bird. So my friends who aren’t allowed to talk about God could still read this book?” Lynda is now doing just that!

My prayer is that when Livia is all grown up, our book will continue to remind her of the story into which God called us both when she was just a little girl. What a blessing it is for me to know that the legacy that I will leave for Livia has been shaped, in part, by her.

# What I Wish We Had Talked About

by Gary Sawatzky



A number of years ago my parents passed away and with them a wealth of information about family—both current and historical—disappeared. If we fail to collect family stories and histories before the older generation passes on, then some of those things that can connect us to others get lost.

“Am I related to ... ?” becomes a question that is not easily answered if there is no historical record, either verbal or written. “Where are my family roots, both physically and spiritually? How

and when did my family come to be living in this place? When did they immigrate and why? Do I have relatives somewhere whom I’ve never met or maybe don’t even know exist?”

Many young people don’t seem interested in questions such as these—or they imagine there will always be time to ask them. Or they barely recognize that there are questions to be asked. Many of us were like that ourselves and regret our lack of initiative with our forebears.

So we can take initiative now by passing on what we know. “What were my parents’ greatest achievements?” or “What were their funniest foibles?” We can pass on the stories we’ve been told and add our own.

Rather than waiting for our children and grandchildren to ask, we can create the opportunity for conversations where we tell the family stories that need to be remembered.

A will and estate plan is a thoughtful way of passing on your faith and values and reminds family members what is important to you. Your *Will and Estate Planning Guide* from Abundance Canada is a good place to start and is available online at [abundance.ca/ywepg](http://abundance.ca/ywepg) or by contacting an Abundance Canada office near you.



# Gratitude Journal

*“I found so many profound things for which I could be deeply thankful to God.”*

— Patty Ollies

Around the time Patty Ollies’ husband, Clive, was diagnosed with cancer, she came across an inspirational calendar with the quote, “Seeds of discouragement cannot grow in a grateful heart.” That day she and Clive started a gratitude journal, in which, every day, they listed the things they were thankful for. Some days it was hard. But they did it together for two years, through the cancer, the radiation, the chemo, and the recovery. “It was a really good exercise for us,” Patty recalls. “We had two very rich years together as a family and as a couple. We lived in hope.”

“At times I felt like I had lost everything,” she observes now. “My choice was either to be angry or to find another purpose. That’s where the gratitude journal became so important to us. The time that we spent on it gave us both strength. It was the gratitude journal and the positive attitude it seemed to cultivate that nurtured my soul during

those two years. It wasn’t just that I became aware of simple things to be grateful for, but it was also the fact that I found so many profound things for which I could be deeply thankful to God.”

*How might you cultivate mindful gratitude in your life?*

Patty recalls that her greatest fear in life had always been that somehow she would be left alone with her kids. That was what scared her the most when Clive was ill. And then, when he passed away suddenly, not from the cancer but from kidney failure, and left her a widow in her forties, she thought, “Are you kidding me? After all this I have to face my biggest fear?”

But, she insists, it was that two-year period of active and mindful gratitude that undergirded her then and allowed her to move on.



If you’d like to learn how our gifting accounts can put your gratitude into action, visit [abundance.ca](http://abundance.ca).

## Calculated Risk

*“Life is too short to not be doing what you love.”* – Dan Driedger



Dan Driedger

“I’m not afraid of risks,” Dan Driedger states, as he reflects on how his life has unfolded since leaving the family farm. He had intended to study Agriculture, but at the last minute, switched to Business, and upon graduation, found himself working in industry.

“I’m willing to take risks. I think you need to be stretched,” he continues. But he recalls feeling increasingly uncomfortable with an employer starting to accept business with military links. “Those contracts supporting the military didn’t align with my faith values, and they made me ponder whether I was on the path I wanted to be on.” He was no longer energized by his work and was ready for change. But what would change look like?

“I saw an ad for Mennonite Central Committee. Normally I wouldn’t have given it any thought. But on the very last day, I submitted my resume.” He knew that accepting the job as Resource Development Director with MCC Ontario would mean being paid considerably less than he was used to. But, he reflects, “I felt like God was asking me to trust him.” To offset his reduction in salary, he

took the opportunity to draw on a side passion and developed a small photography business.

Dan has moved to a new role as Executive Director of MennoHomes. He has also expanded his photography business which allowed him to follow his heart and values in his new career. “My faith allowed me to see that maybe I could use my skills and abilities elsewhere. I didn’t think about it as God’s work; this new challenge at MennoHomes is a job I want to do and do it well. My faith has allowed me to take the financial risk to work for less.”

“There’s always a part of me that’s very much aware of my mortality,” Dan reflects, observing that several members of his family have suffered untimely deaths. “That makes me willing to take some risks and to make good use of whatever time I have.” His mantra, he says, has always been: “What are you willing to give up to get the things you want?” He adds, with conviction, “Life is too short to not be doing what you love.”

*What choices have you needed to make to align your work or volunteer activities with your values? How well have you been able to manage the risks of change?*



## Finding a New Community

To get some regular exercise, Erwin Cornelsen began to swim at the local YMCA four or five days a week in his early eighties. Arriving at the pool at his usual early hour one morning, he heard familiar gospel tunes coming from the end of a hallway. Determined to identify the source of the music that had drawn his attention, he found a group of Chinese Canadians singing the songs he knew so well—not in English or even in German, but in Chinese. “They were so friendly,” he exclaims, recalling how the whole group embraced him right away, seemingly oblivious to the fact that in terms of language and culture they belonged to different worlds. Over many years, he and his Chinese Canadian friends have enjoyed consistently strong bonds of mutual love and support. “Their caring and unselfishness overwhelm me at times,” Erwin reflects. “The reality of God’s presence is truly everywhere.”

## Finding Freedom

D.R.L. made the decision that retirement would be a time when she would no longer feel rushed, when she could savour life at her own pace. She wouldn’t obsess about how many vacation days she had left. She could act on impulse, dilly-dally in her sunroom, watch the birds, listen to the leaves rustling, take in the fragrances of each season. Having granted herself permission to be spontaneous, she found that curious things began to happen. With only two weeks’ notice, for example, she found herself preparing to participate in Habitat for Humanity’s annual fundraiser, the Cycle of Hope. She would cycle 1,600 kilometers—or whatever part of that distance she wished to complete or found she could manage. She had for some time been a supporter of Habitat, but cycling farther than the local city park was well out of her comfort zone.

The ride was memorable, especially the last day. It was then that, along with forty-five other cyclists, she arrived at the Habitat build site and met the family who would soon know the site as their home. “This new home was made possible with funds raised by people like us that day,” she recalls, adding, “That afternoon gratitude surrounded us like a soft rain on a summer day. I soaked it up, knowing it was a gift that would enrich my life for years to come.”



# Integrating Generations

*Seniors age better when they have significant relationships with the young.*



Many of us can no longer depend on the sustaining richness of the village or neighbourhood, where generations interact casually, day-by-day, nor on the extended family, where siblings and cousins, uncles and aunts and grandparents—individuals across a spectrum of ages—get together with regularity, to talk and eat, and to share joys and sorrows alike. Even the nuclear family consisting of Dad, Mom, and the kids is often geographically dispersed once the kids have left home. There are few venues in our twenty-first century lives that we could describe as truly intergenerational. Except the church.

The congregation can provide a venue for intergenerational exchange, Elsie Rempel states in her book, *Please Pass the Faith: The Spiritual Art of Grandparenting*.

“I’ve learned about many creative ways grandparents stay in touch with their grandchildren.” Elsie notes that many congregations are making concerted efforts to become more intergenerational. “Seniors age better when they have significant relationships with the young,” she remarks. And a recent study has revealed that “young people stay more closely connected to faith communities when they are in significant relationships with seniors.”

Elsie suggests that we find ways to expand the networks that put people of all generations in the same place at the same time: provide opportunities for intentional mutual engagement, whether it’s “at summer camps, on Mennonite Disaster Service trips, at the local thrift store or soup kitchen.” Any one of us could come up with “let’s get acquainted” venues to add to Elsie’s list.

How enriched we seniors would be if we could find ways to meet and interact with a wide range of young people. They have so much to teach us. And as we learn from them they will hear in our stories of victory and disappointment something of the wealth of our own experience, conviction, and wisdom.

After all, Elsie notes: “Wherever we are along the road, God has a place for us. [That place is blessed by] being in relationship with God’s children of all ages.”

# Living in Contentment

You might know her. Agatha. Her husband passed away ten years ago after a brief illness. She has two children living in town who visit her often. Her other children have spread out across the prairies and are involved in various professions. They come home regularly for family gatherings and special events.

Agatha lives in a modest older house in the middle of town. Her house and yard are always well kept and there is a sizable garden in the back, which she tends to with care each summer. After preserving enough for the winter she shares the remainder of the crop with her family and neighbours.

Or perhaps you know Peter and Susan. They live three streets over from Agatha in the house they purchased shortly after their wedding fifty-five years ago. Peter worked for the local cheese factory while they raised their three children. They have limited savings because they have continued to support their youngest, Sara, who is living on her own but, due to intellectual challenges, is not able to get by without assistance.

Peter works two days a week to supplement their pensions and help cover the cost of medications

Susan needs since she developed a heart condition eight years ago. Each Wednesday you will see them working alongside Agatha at the thrift store. Fridays they deliver meals for Meals on Wheels.

What you will notice immediately when you meet Agatha or Peter and Susan is their attitude. They are thankful for the health they have and for the opportunity to help others. If you visit them at home they are quick to offer coffee and some baked goods, often made fresh that morning. They are interested in you, asking what you have been up to and how you and your family are doing. They happily share news of their children and grandchildren. They value relationships. They have learned to trust that God will supply their needs.

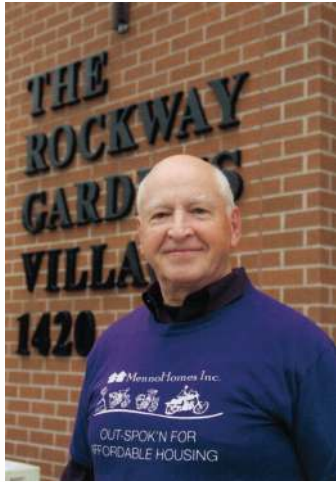
Next time you visit with Agatha or Peter and Susan, take the opportunity to commend them for being much-needed examples of contentment in an anxious, materialistically-oriented world.

*“There are two ways to get enough. One is to continue to accumulate more and more. The other is to desire less.”*

– G. K. Chesterton

Is contentment an ideal that only some people are born with, or can any of us choose to be content? How are contentment and generosity related?

## Answering the Call



Martin Buhr

At age 59, Martin Buhr had completed 20 years as Executive Director of the House of Friendship—an inner-city mission in Kitchener, Ontario. He and his wife Pauline subsequently took on several short-term volunteer assignments but were open to a fuller experience.

Then the phone rang. MCC Ontario invited him to help explore alternatives to the growing shortage of affordable housing in his home community of Waterloo Region. “If I was going to re-engage in community work,” he reflected, “I hoped it would involve affordable housing.”

So when the call came, Martin was ready and eager. “Throughout my life,” he observed, “all I wanted was to love and serve God.”

Earlier in his career, Martin had worked in social services with the Ontario Government. Using his

many contacts, he soon garnered the support of local and regional politicians, area churches, and social service agencies. Martin also attracted substantial financial support for what would become MennoHomes as donors responded to the depth of his passionate vision. Since 2001, MennoHomes has provided affordable housing to low-income families, as well as to seniors and disabled persons with modest incomes.

In 2007, when his wife Pauline passed away, Martin thought he might step down to deal with his grief. Persuaded by the organization that his leadership was still needed, he found that staying engaged led to the re-fueling of his passion. Continuing full-time, he accepted a one quarter-time salary, remarking that he does things “because they need to be done and it feels good to do them.”

Martin says that he worked well beyond retirement age, because being active helped him to nurture his financial, spiritual, and mental assets and abilities. Having now stepped down from being President, Martin will continue to ride his bicycle to fundraise for MennoHomes and Trek4Kids. He’ll also enjoy working in his garden and volunteering for his church and community—at least until he gets another call.

## A Mindset of Generosity



Henry Esau

We often hear that members of the younger generation should expect to work at several careers in a lifetime. But this is true not only of the young. After teaching public school for twenty years and then serving as registrar of Providence University College

and Seminary for twelve years, Henry Esau spent twenty years managing condominiums. He was 55 when he began that last career, and when he turned 65 he continued to work for another ten years. But, seeing a new opportunity, he made his work his ministry and gave his earnings away.

“I did that because I follow Jesus,” he says. “It gives true meaning to life.” He observes: “My wife Betty and I never lived extravagantly, but we have lived well enough. We’ve always tried to help others and give to church and missions.

Now we’re able to do more—there’s a lot of need out there.” Henry pauses and adds with a glimmer in his eye, “And we haven’t paid income taxes in years!”

“Jesus told us in many ways that we should put the needs of others ahead of our own,” Henry says. “So I look for opportunities to be generous and to be involved, financially and physically. It’s a mindset,” he says, “simply a way of thinking about our role in the world.”

## Enriched by the Journey

They treasure the new friends they have made around North America. They all recognize that there are countless needs out there, and they have discovered the rewards of playing a role in relieving them. Every one of them is full of gratitude and wants to be able to share something with others experiencing loss or poverty. They all acknowledge that their purposeful journeys have enriched their lives. They are volunteers.

Fred was a busy electrical contractor when he decided to take two weeks to help rebuild houses destroyed by California wildfires. Transformed by the experience, he began volunteering regularly, two weeks per year, and even encouraged his employees to think about donating some of their time as well. He has since sold his business and now spends two months of every year lending his expertise to projects across the continent.

When Peter retired from teaching, he looked forward to doing some work with his hands. He remembered nostalgically having been a construction worker during his university days. His wife Sharon, also retired, still loved to cook and bake. So for fifteen years now they have spent three months annually volunteering on a variety of building projects. Peter acts as project leader on a site while Sharon makes sure everyone on the crew is well fed.

These people travel with a purpose. With pleasure they expend the best of themselves, and they return from their journeys enriched and fulfilled. They wouldn’t want it any other way.

# Opportunities Through Succession

by Edwin Friesen (1944-2008)



Edwin Friesen

Succession may be a wonderful word to the young, upwardly mobile entrepreneur. It speaks of progression, of advancement, of being included, of (finally) being in the driver's seat. It may look quite different and threatening if you are on the 'moving on' part of succession.

There will be the loss of control, a sense of no longer being in the inner circle of decision making or even being out of the loop altogether.

If you pass on the family farm or business, your successors will do things differently—sometimes for the better and sometimes not. There may be new crop rotations, different equipment, new partnerships, and more. Your lifetime web of friends and business associates will be replaced with new ones as your successors put their stamp on the enterprise. The author of Ecclesiastes captures the wistful sadness of this in Ecclesiastes 2:21: "For though I do my work with wisdom, knowledge, and skill, I must leave everything I own to people who haven't worked to earn it."

A very gifted minister was turning 65 and planning to reduce his public ministry engagements. I thought *What a Shame*. Was there no way to transfer his knowledge, wisdom, skill and experience to the next generation? Must each new generation start all over again? Why does

the wisdom of each generation have to end in the grave? Or does it?

Jesus faced a similar situation. How would the fledgling New Testament church carry on without him? What if they chose to do things differently than he intended? What if they made mistakes—big ones? For three years he poured his life into his disciples, and then he sent them forth, empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry on his work. And the Jesus movement keeps going and growing even as generations come and go. What a remarkable story of never ending succession.

Though we can't extend our life, we can extend our influence beyond our grave.

Consider these suggestions:

1. Intentionally mentor the people around you as you go through life, including family, work, and leisure associates. Let them see how you handle difficult situations, major disappointments as well as your financial practices.
2. Tell (and write down) your life stories to the next generation. Include stories where God seemed distant and unresponsive as well as stories where God came through for you.
3. Empower the people around you by offering your affirmation. All of us walk a little taller and are capable of a little more when affirmed. The effect of affirmation will linger long after you and I are gone.



I am well aware that the meter on my life is running. Before long, I too will pass on the baton to those who follow. My goal is to leave behind something that is worth more and will last longer than money. I'm sure yours is too. Be intentional about it.



## Planning for Transition

*“Retirement is an elusive concept at this juncture. It seems that to train the next generation, it takes time and lots of effort. Also, until the details of the succession are fully established, one feels obligated to stay quite involved, even physically.”*

– Abundance Canada client

**Succession planning is a long process.**

**It is complicated and requires the assistance of lawyers and accountants.**

**There are competing priorities.**

**Each plan is unique.**

For generous people, a significant gift to charity through a donor-advised foundation like Abundance Canada may be a wise addition to the plan as it allows for ongoing giving in future years.

Would you like to set up a family foundation without having to navigate the complexities that come with a private foundation? Abundance Canada has the expertise and ability to manage your family's charitable goals with the flexibility you need.

# Living Generously

by Darren Pries-Klassen, Abundance Canada Executive Director



Darren Pries-Klassen

Canadian attitudes toward retirement have changed over the years. According to Statistics Canada, the life expectancy of a Canadian male in 1960 was only 68 years of age and 74 for a Canadian female. For many of that era, getting to retirement

was like reaching the finish line; just make it to retirement then relax for what little time you have left. Today, life expectancy for a Canadian male and female is 80 and 83 years of age, respectively. Based on these averages, most people have many meaningful years of life remaining after they retire. They have plenty of time for a new role, career, activity, etc. This reality is changing how we view our retirement years. These changing attitudes are reflected in this booklet. Many choose to work longer, often for fewer hours, and to use the additional time to volunteer with or provide support for a variety of charitable projects. Others take a more active role in their churches. Others are finding ways to further develop their relationship with their children and grandchildren.

Approaching retirement is often a time to think more seriously about our legacy. How will you be

remembered? What are the values you want to pass on? How can others understand the important role your faith has played in your life?

The common denominator among the stories presented here is that each person is living out his or her faith. They are motivated by their desire to serve God and support others in Kingdom work. That's also the starting point for Abundance Canada. Whether we are setting up or making changes to your gifting account or helping you work through a will and estate plan, we begin with the importance of Christian faith and those things you value most.

Retirement can be many things, including a time when we make some of our greatest contributions to others, the church, and to humanity. Many of us continue to enjoy the benefit of a lifetime of wisdom and experience and to nurture the assets God has entrusted to us. Abundance Canada offers us a unique framework for leaving a legacy, for making contributions we might never have been able to make in our lifetime. This opportunity is Holy Ground. It is a profound moment when faith, resources, and opportunity collide to honour God and bless others.

*“We’d love to hear your story, help you consider options, and explore together how God would have you live life backwards... generously.”—Darren Pries-Klassen*

## RESPOND MORE

### *Because Generosity Changes Everything*

Abundance Canada encourages and enables giving that is faithful and joyful—from God’s hands through yours. Should you want to explore ways to put your generosity dreams and goals into action, call us. Our experienced staff can help make giving easy.

Whether you want to learn more about flexible gift options that secure your receipt for tax purposes but can be distributed over time or how Abundance Canada can assist with will and estate planning, Abundance Canada has resources to assist you. Call one of our offices located across Canada or visit [abundance.ca](http://abundance.ca) to learn more.



“Retirement involves more than jetting off into the sunset in search of the perfect beach chair at a five-star resort. It’s not an extended holiday; it can be an opportunity to serve like never before.”—Stacey Weeks



*Because generosity changes everything*

1.800.772.3257 | [abundance.ca](http://abundance.ca)