



**2008 My Next Chapter First Prize Winner
Michael O'Leary**

"A Turn to a New Season"

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
(From the Bible, Ecclesiastes III)

Also: Pete Seeger song
'Turn!, Turn!, Turn!' 1952

The years have been good to me. As the oldest of twelve children, I've lived through some lean times; at ten, my paper routes, gardening, and trash hauling provided the mortgage payments (my dad had a drinking problem). Through this I learned business skills like negotiating and I learned the value of a good work ethic. I enhanced my earnings with 3:00 a.m. rides with the milkman (running milk, cheese, butter, etc.) My first life coaching came from him over breakfast. Years later the seminary added the spiritual coaching.

Heavenly Father saw fit to bring me back from four tours in Vietnam (I stayed in hopes that my siblings would not have to go).

My career with computers rewarded me with ever increasing paychecks as different companies offered a bit more than the last. I finally stayed with a telecommunications company creating a product that would eventually sell for millions; and voilà, within ten years, I'm the National Sales Manager, knocking down big bucks, living the life of Reilly.

What does this have to do with the next chapter in my life?

Well, at 59, it's a new season. I've been blessed with many gifts and now it's time to Turn and return, Turn and renew, Turn and re-sow. It is time to search out my Purpose Under the Heaven.

Again, luck has held my hand. A dear friend grew old and his health was failing. He asked only one thing of me: take up his cause. He volunteered at a homeless shelter. I went with him there and made friends with those who didn't get all the breaks that I had had. He died and soon, one day a week became two, then two three, and three four. I do not remember a happier time in my life. I pray only that the Lord will give me many days for this season.