

## The Best Is Yet to Be

“The measure of a life is not its duration but it’s donation.” Corrie Ten Boom

A recent birthday reminded me that I am well over the proverbial hill and finding that it takes me twice as long to accomplish half as much.

We often speak of hardening of the arteries as one of the hazards of advancing years. But, there is an even greater danger in the hardening of our attitudes. We have no choice about growing old but our choice of attitude, is entirely our own. As someone put it, “you don’t grow old, you get old by not growing.” Aging is a process while being old is a state of mind. Some feel old at 40 what others feel young at 80.

In our culture, some view old age as an unfortunate period of life while others seek to enjoy the positive blessings and opportunities it can bring. An interesting fact emerges from a study of such cases. The group with the more positive outlook included many who are disabled. They have learned to tap sources of inner strength that enable them to rise above their handicaps and live lives of usefulness.

Without knowing all the answers, I’m discovering that the secret of aging well, is found in being both realistic and optimistic. As realists we cannot hide the fact that as old age increases, energy decreases. In a weakened state, disability and pain are often unwelcome guests that refuse to leave.

But, in spite of its limitations and challenges, our sunset years can be some of the most fulfilling of our lives. For example, retired persons, in fair health, can find many opportunities for volunteer service. Research is showing that some of our most productive years can often come later in life. Also, most seniors have gained from experience a lot of mature wisdom they can share with grandchildren, neighbours and new acquaintances.

The church Carol and I attend is seeking, through its ministries, to become: “An intergenerational community of Christ followers.” I truly believe that youth and older individuals need each other. Sharing time and talents can result in mutual enrichment, both intellectually and spiritually. We all have the same emotional needs. We all need love, respect, the need to be wanted and the opportunity to express our feelings and our faith.

Finally, there comes a moment in everyone’s life when time merges into eternity. Our eternal home depends upon our relationship with God in this life. So, we need to have our bags packed and ready to go.

The attitude of expectancy, which all of us can have, is expressed by Robert Browning in Rabbi Ben Ezra –

“Grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life, for which the first was made:  
Our times are in His hand  
Who said a whole I planned,  
Youth shows but half; trust God;  
see all, nor be afraid!”