

GROWING Together

ISSN: 1481-9465

RETIREMENT: A LIFELONG INVESTMENT

Is there a Christian way to retire? What is the freedom of “Freedom 55?”

In our society retirement is marketed - very carefully and for profit! Retirees are told in many different ways to have fun, relax and consume with the same intensity of their working years. In such a hyperactive world, all things flashy command attention: “new” and “beautiful” are valued above all else.

We are bombarded with the “North American retirement dream.” Have fun! Spend money! Go more places! Stay young! Carefree condos, winter months of organized leisure in warm climates and endless rounds of golf are promoted as the lifestyle we have earned and deserve.

In such a society, Christian retirement is a serious challenge.

Ken and Melanie Evans bought into the retirement dream! They sold their spacious two storey “empty nest” and launched into a new lifestyle that promised fun and relaxation. With few obligations and commitments, they joined a golf and country club, bought a timeshare condo and traveled abroad. Everything was going according to plan. They relished their freedom. Then Ken had a heart attack.



Unplanned and unexpected, his medical crisis severely limited their activities. Melanie and Ken suddenly faced the truth most of us want to ignore all our lives: time, health and resources have limits.

While dealing with their own unsettling experience, they realized that many of their friends were avoiding the realities of aging. Melanie and Ken began to see and to question the subtle messages they had received over

many years. Now, they wanted to guard against being tempted into a careless lifestyle. A new and thoughtful plan began to emerge.

Ken has taken an active role in worship leadership at their church, an ongoing commitment over the winter months. Melanie is now spending a couple of days a week tutoring a young Afghani refugee who has a learning disability. Together, Ken and Melanie are discovering an untapped spiritual dimension. Life is not defined by a 9 to 5 job nor is it guided by the push to get away or spend a lot of money. With the accumulated knowledge and experience of a lifetime there is great satisfaction in reaching out to others.

Retirement does come with loss. However, retirement also provides rich opportunity. The bible makes this point in subtle ways. Wisdom and compassion come with age and faithful living. The Middle Eastern culture of the bible holds elders in high esteem. Seniors in that community are valued for their wisdom and experience.

Stories like those of Eli, Naomi and Eunice show how the maturity of years brings valuable insight and trustworthy learning. Their lifelong knowledge of God genuinely encourages the spiritual development of those who are still young.

Simeon and Anna, two elders in the temple, live their later days in the expectation of seeing Christ. Hope becomes a reality when finally they hold and bless the child, Jesus. Two old people become messengers of the new!

We will all face retirement. Unexpected encounters await each of us! It is essential to consider how we will invest our hard-earned, lifelong “capital.” Our later years give us precious freedom for new understanding. Some of the “losses” of aging and retirement can be creatively and genuinely lived as “gain.”

What is your vision of retirement? How do you propose to make the most of your lifelong “investments?”



GROWING TOGETHER is a series of five Sunday bulletin inserts for the ecumenical education of Christ's faithful.

Prairie Centre for Ecumenism
600 – 45th Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7L 5W9
CANADA © 2005



phone: (306)-653-1633
fax: (306) 653-1821
email: pcc@ecumenism.net
www.ecumenism.net