

The Bulwark

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Some years ago, Dutch artist and “visual communications designer” Yoni Lefevre, created a project entitled “Grey Power”. She was hoping to demonstrate the vibrancy of those of a certain age; namely the grandparents of the child of the Netherlands. What she had the children do, was to sketch their grandparents. It was her firm conviction that the drawings of the children would present a true portrait of older people (she took the drawings, then had the actual grandparents dress and do what was drawn, then took a life-size photograph). Her goal was realized, as the children’s art work presented a positive image of the aging population rather than the prevailing attitude of negativity in the Netherlands. It seems as though the perception of the aged are they “lonely and pathetic”, to coin a French phrase “au contraire”. Grandpa and grandma were seen playing tennis, gardening, painting and so much more.



To be honest, it isn’t just in the Netherlands where there exists a somewhat dour view of those who have accumulated aged status. In Proverbs 16:31, Solomon noted, “A gray head is a crown of glory; it is found in the way of righteousness.” It is a fact of life that the aging process is just that a process, and it pushes ever forward, and mankind can do precious little to slow it down, let alone stop it. It should be embraced and dare I say, celebrated.

Bear in mind that there are any number of examples of where a person of advanced age remains vital and cogent. Caleb, of Old Testament note, was vibrant well into his senior years. You may recall that as a much younger man, he stealthily along with others crept into the Promised Land, before the children of Israel would with God’s help would conquer the Canaanites. However, it was only he and Joshua who firmly believed the victory would belong to children of Israel (see Numbers 13:30-33, 14:6-13). Conversely, God promised that Caleb would enter the Promised Land. At the age of 85, Caleb is quoted as having said, “I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and

coming in.” (Joshua 14:11) In the next verse he forcefully asserted the parcel of land that he wanted, as promised by God, and Hebron was granted to him by Joshua. Caleb was anything but “retiring”.

Clearly God does not forget about us as we age. Though we may develop a “hitch in our giddy-up” there is no reason to be thought of as a doddering old person. Moreover, what was seen in the sociological exercise brought about by Yoni Lefevre, is that from the eyes of young people, their grandparents still had a zest and quest for life. While the word respect was not seen per se, nevertheless it could most certainly be implied and brings to mind the directive seen in Leviticus 19:32, “You shall rise up before the grayheaded, and honor the aged...”

At every juncture in life, our life has significance. Regardless of what age we may find self, it is always good to bear in mind what Paul penned to the brethren in Corinth in his second letter. “Therefore do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.” (4:16) Drink in that thought, a day by day renewal in the inner man. Rejuvenation, which carries the meaning of “restoration of youthful vigor”. Optimization that allows one to make the needed attitude adjustments to make the most of every new day; developing further spiritually (see also 2Corinthians 4:17 through 5:9)

“The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, he will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green. To declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.” (Psalms 92:12-15)

Unquestionably there is “gray power”, maybe not in respect to what the world deems as power but power nonetheless. But the power of influence, example, teaching, faithfulness and so much more in a spiritual sense. (wbe)