

Wisdom of the Ages

The wisdom and capabilities of elderly persons in America are not revered as they are in many other cultures of the world. Instead, in the United States there is a preoccupation for exalting youth, often to the detriment of the interests of the senior population. Such a mindset is most visible in advertising and in fashion design, in which market analysts are convinced that appealing to youth offers the most economic return on their investments.

Certainly, society should be concerned about creating opportunities and advantages for our young men and women to enable them to be successful in both their personal and professional lives. Such devotion assures the best future for our families and our country. My parents, for instance, wanted my brothers and me to have better lives than they had experienced, and that is as it should be.

But senior citizens should not be placed on the shelf, where it is assumed that life has passed them by and they have no contribution to make to the public good. In other countries, particularly in the Orient, the knowledge and insights gleaned from years of experiences are highly esteemed – and sought after.

The truth is that people of all ages and backgrounds are important, and their ideas should be valued according to their merit, and not automatically discarded based on a prejudicial viewpoint.

As examples, Abraham was 75 years old when God called him to move to an unknown land, Canaan. At the age of 80, Moses freed his people from bondage in Egypt and led them on a 40-year journey to the Promised Land. On the other hand, Samuel was just a young boy when God called him to be a prophet. David was just a shepherd lad when he was chosen to be the king of Israel. The timing of God's call, you see, will not always conform to our expectations or the world's standards. He can – and does – use anyone of any age, gender and nationality to carry out His work.

In the centers of Life Care and American Lifestyles and in the work of Life Care at Home, we have the privilege of serving people with a storehouse of learning. Yes, they have physical challenges, or they would not be under our watch, but they have so much to share with us and to teach us. Daily, we can benefit from our interaction with them.

One of the special opportunities that I have is to be associated with the production of the Life Care Leader magazine. It spotlights the amazing accomplishments and stories of our residents, and gives to them a channel of communication to share with others the wisdom of the ages.

Let us never take for granted our access to their lessons about living and relationships.

--Beecher Hunter