

# Reflections from Retirement

## Aging - an Adventure, not a Disease

by A. E. P. (Ed) Wall

Last week I received a renewal notice from the AARP, the American Association of Retired Persons. I'm offered a choice. I can renew for one year, three years, or five years. As an optimist I'm going for five years, which will cover me until a bit before my 90th birthday.

A friend told me that's a ripe old age, and I thought I'd better do a fact-check on that. What makes someone ripe? One reference book says something may be called ripe when its thread-like tendrils discolor and stop growing. Check!

Another way, especially if you're wondering about a melon, is to rap on it to see whether it sounds hollow. If it sounds

hollow, it probably is ripe. There's nothing personal about this.

Growing old is an adventure, with risks, fears and satisfactions. Old age is sometimes treated as though it were a disease all by itself, and that's a futile approach. Nobody has found a cure for growth, or truly wants one. Old age is the consummation of human growth. Yes, older folks have diseases. So do a tragic number of infants, children, young moms and dads. Jesus, the greatest healer, offers the promise of eternal life, but no personal example of aging.

The words of Moses to Pharaoh resonate with power many generations after they were spoken. Exodus tells us that

Moses was 80 years old when he insisted, "Let my people go." In Psalm 71 we read, "So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, till I proclaim thy might to all the generations to come."

Now that's a positive fulfillment of advanced age – to proclaim God, not necessarily from a pulpit or in a letter to the editor, but as a living proclamation of God's healing love. **t**

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