

# REFLECTIONS

*A monthly source of information for beneficiaries of the Adventist Retirement Plan*

## Retired... and lonely

Loneliness in retirement is not a myth. I observe it while delivering Meals on Wheels in a retirement village. My supervisor told me I will be the first person they see all day. She was right. Many residents found creative ways to lengthen my visits. Food was secondary to a chance to tell me about their struggle with loneliness.

I see two types of loneliness, transient and chronic. Transient loneliness is short-lived. I've heard it likened to hunger prior to a meal. I experience it when my wife attends a women's retreat. I am lonely during her absence, but I know she will return in two days.

Chronic loneliness is cause for serious concern. It is likened to hunger with no hope of nourishment. Left unaddressed it can lead to emotional crippling or illness.

After years of extensive research, James J. Lynch wrote *A Cry Unheard—New Insights Into the Medical Consequences of Loneliness* (Bancroft Press, 2000). Other works are helpful, but I have found this work most helpful to me. Leaders in the secular setting and the church setting need to be familiar with this book.

Lynch emphasizes the necessity of healthy dialogue. He calls it the elixir of life. It is sharing all that life is and means to you with another person who is willing to share with you. The absence of dialogue easily leads to the lethal poison of chronic loneliness.

In a prophetic tone, Lynch writes, "if current trends persist, communicative disease and the resultant loneliness will equal communicable disease as a leading cause of premature death in all post-industrial nations during the twenty-first century."

Motivated by Lynch's research and the findings of others, I assisted a health educator in developing a six-part pre-retirement seminar. The CEO's of large companies and the pastors of prominent churches welcomed us.

Employees six months or less from retirement were

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**Payroll Bulletin Board**

**Checks/EFT Released**

**THIS MONTH:** February 27

**NEXT MONTH:** March 27



## Retired...and lonely *cont.*

required to attend on company time. I presented the segment on loneliness and loss.

One person objected to attending my segment. The CEO told him, "Your chances of loneliness or losing increase greatly the day you retire." No exceptions were made.

Sadly, many church leaders allow employees to retire without a blip on the screen. One day an employee, the next a retiree. No preparation for this life-changing event.

The administrator of the Adventist hospital where I worked gave me a privileged assignment. Chaplain, I know a retiring pastor who cannot function. He lost his wife in addition to losing his life work. He can't sleep. He holed himself up in his house. I'm asking you to spend a long weekend with him. He has agreed to have you as his guest.

That weekend reinforced in my mind the importance of face-to-face ministry to the lonely and grieving. We lifted the dark window shades. We cooked. We swapped preacher stories. We laughed and cried. I had a new friend.

Unfortunately, life seems to go on at a rapid pace for industrial and church leaders. Preparing employees for retirement does not seem to be a high priority. I cannot change the high-tech trends that create loneliness. I can share things that make pre-retirement and post-retirement a little easier. I call the ideas behavioral rather than self-help.

- Make a firm decision that loneliness will not control you.
- Name loneliness. Loneliness is not a sign of personal failure or weak faith.
- Create and enjoy music.
- Do woodworking. So far, I have built three cradles for my growing family.
- Memorize a hymn and sing it with feeling.
- Lay plans for the next 20 years and think how you'll fulfill them.
- Crochet or quilt.
- Before you retire, find a volunteer opportunity.
- Consider getting a pet.

Having given these suggestions, I realize I must share a comprehensive approach to loneliness that I have used as I worked for 30 years in hospice care. I call it breaking the alienation. By the grace of God, we must break our alienation with God. This leads to alienation from self, that is, being aware of how much God looks at us with compassion. As a result of alienation from self, we break our alienation with others. Importantly, we break our alienation with nature. May breaking alienation and being in tune with God, others and nature, help us to prepare for retirement and live gracefully after retirement.



*Larry Yeagley retired after 40 years as pastor and hospital chaplain. During his career, he co-developed two hospices and his Grief Recovery model has been used by hospices in United States and Canada. He has authored seven books and numerous magazine articles. Currently, gardening and landscaping are his joy.*

## Are you moving?

If you received this newsletter, we apparently have a good address for you! If you plan to move, please help us keep you on our mailing list by correcting your address. Remember:

- You also need to make an address correction with the Social Security Office.
- If you have moved to a new state or county and need to update your address for your MediGap, Medicare Advantage or Medicare Part D insurance carrier, please remember you must call Aon Retiree Health Exchange first. They will help you choose a new insurance carrier in the state or county you have moved to. If you don't call Aon Retiree Health Exchange first, you could unintentionally disenroll yourself (yikes!) from the Aon Retiree Health Exchange plans and thus lose your HRA (Health Reimbursement Account) money for the future. To contact the Aon Retiree Health Exchange, phone 1-844-360-4714.

**Send changes of address info to:**

**Adventist Retirement Plans**

**9705 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046**

**You can email your change of address to**

**[NADRetirement@NADAdventist.org](mailto:NADRetirement@NADAdventist.org),**

**or call 1-443-391-7300.**



## Adventist Retirement Plan

[www.adventistretirement.org](http://www.adventistretirement.org)

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**Barbara McLaughlin: 443-391-7345**  
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# Adventist Retirement

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## Volunteers Needed



Someone has said that “Work is the recreation of the retired.” If you would like to make a difference in retirement and enjoy meaningful recreation at the same time, then you are a good candidate to be a volunteer ambassador for Adventist World Radio. Volunteer field representatives are needed, especially in the following states: Hawaii, Nevada, Utah, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Maryland. These provinces in Canada also need field reps: Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, and Newfoundland.

**If you are interested in being a part of the AWR team, please contact Robert Peck at 660-620-2534 or [rgpeck43@outlook.com](mailto:rgpeck43@outlook.com).**