

## Baby-Boomers in Transition

We Baby-Boomers have seen much progress in the land called, Workplace, over several years. We still have sexism; but, evolving laws, corporate policies and cultures are fighting against it. There is still a glass ceiling; but, there are now holes and cracks where there were few before. We still have racism; but, our secular culture and legislation are changing to stop it. Nationalism, regionalism and parochialism still infect our thinking; but, we are learning to think more globally.

One area of change where we have seen slow progress is age-ism. We Baby-Boomers are working to overcome this evil, too. But, sadly, our progress is that of an arthritic snail. When people reach 55 or 'older,' they are perceived as having diminishing economic value, and become unemployable. Either that, or their salaries and benefits become so expensive, it is more cost-effective to show them the door than keep them. With the clock ticking faster than the workplace is changing, we Boomers may become victims of age-ism rather than its masters or conquerors. So, how do we deal with it, and where do we find hope and Good News?

Continental Africa gives us our first message of good news. Some people and their languages use a word for *God* which means *Creator-Owner* in English. Evidently, they recognize that God is our *Owner* as well as *Creator*. What they say resonates with the language and proclamations of Scripture.

The Prophet Jeremiah declares (29:11), *For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.* Jeremiah's message for all people is: this is God's world. God made it and owns it, and we are God's people. God's will is to create and enhance life. God redeems lives when they are faltering or broken. God wants to give us life as it can be with God - not as the world dictates and imposes.

Jeremiah's point for *chronologically enriched* Boomers is: God, who created us, has blessed us with knowledge, experiences, skills and strengths, and then called us (vocations) to apply them in specific workplaces. God has no interest in anyone being discriminated against because of age, gender, skin color, or country of origin.

While we Boomers are employed in the workplace, it does not own us. God does. God is always our and the workplace's ultimate CEO. While workplaces value us for what we do, God values us for who we are as God's children + what we do.

Jeremiah continues (29:12-14), *...when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord.* God's will is to bless and enable life. God does not want to have anyone imposed upon by discriminatory workplace practices. Careers and jobs come and go. But, when a workplace says, in effect: *You're too old. The door's that way,* it is God also who is being spoken to in that way - not only us.

What Jeremiah says has an echo in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. In 3:16, 20, Paul says, *I pray that...he may grant that you be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit...(God) is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.* As we ask God how to continue applying our skills and experiences, regardless of age, we may count on God to respond. A new idea may come from within us, or from someone we know. An opportunity may become available, from among life's infinite array of opportunities. God is always eager to show them to us. God will open doors that we haven't seen or thought of yet. Asking God to help us will reveal to us *abundantly more than we can ask or imagine.*

Boomers have faced years of discriminatory challenges in the workplace. With many, there is progress. Now, age-ism is creeping into our lives. Progress to change it is slow, and the resistance is fierce. But, the good news is: we Boomers have the teaching of our African brothers and sisters to alert us, the encouragement of Scripture to inspire us, decades of our own experience to draw on, and our Creator-Owner God to continue leading us. For these blessings, thanks be to God!

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