

Retirement – New Beginning

Shortly before my retirement in 2015, I read Colin Powell's book, *It Worked For Me* (HarperCollins, New York, 2012). In concise, topical chapters, General Powell shares what values worked for him in his life and work.

On the subject of retirement (*Time to Get off the Train*, chapter 31) he compares life and work to riding on a train. The train arrives at many stations. At each station, some people get off; others get on. Then, the train continues its journey.

Retirement begins as a station where we arrive and get off the train.

New Beginning

When we arrive at the station, we are encouraged to look around to see what other trains are out there. When one train looks inviting – when we sense God's vocation calling us to board it - we can begin a whole new life journey with God. For example:

Case Study 1

Fifteen months ago, my train arrived at a station. I knew that it was my time to get off and reflect: "Ok, God; what do I do with my bundle of formal education, life experiences, marketing management and ordained ministry? I can't just toss all that."

A few months later, I was invited to minister in a church's and Niagara Region's shelter for the homeless. The lives of its residents are broken from addictions, spousal abuse, bankruptcies, burnout and a long list of etceteras. Suffice to say, the residents are deeply hurting people! They need encouragement, affirmation, spiritual healing, and specific examples of how much God loves each of them.

One shelter program guides residents through a daily Scripture passage, case study, prayer or whatever, to facilitate their responses to God. My role, as a team member, is to *be with* the resident-participants, *assure them* of a safe place to share their thoughts, ideas, and life experiences, and *encourage* them to answer their questions. Sometimes, my background can help them with information they may not know. But, the focus is always on God and them.

Case Study 2

Another ministry is the shelter's Sunday lunch program. I joined a team that gathers every other week to prepare, serve and eat lunch with 60+ residents, and clean up afterwards. Serving in the lunch ministry is an indescribable privilege! Gathering at meals to be with God and one another was always a priority in Jesus' earthly ministry.

The Point

General Powell is correct: life is like a train, with many stops. When we get off one train (our past worklife) let us observe other trains out there. Which one will we board? God will guide us. God always offers new opportunities to *become* and *do* beyond our dreams.

Conclusion

Retirement = New Opportunities to be and do with God. What bundle of education, life experiences, and employment can you offer to God and God's people? Ask God. Expect God to answer.

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