

Seniors can pass on wisdom to young generation

By FLORENCE WILKINSON
Most of us grew up with a lot of sayings that gave us a lesson in a nutshell. I have been reading some articles recently which indicate that either we do not take "bird's eye view" seriously enough, or that it is not a big enough saying. Perhaps for our times we need to think in terms of an "astronaut's view."

It is sometimes discouraging for a generation to find out that even when it thought it was doing the very best thing it turned out to be a bad thing, or, if not a bad thing, to have brought some bad results with it.

For example: Lyme disease. Thirty years ago Lyme disease was not reported because there were few deer and fewer ticks. Hunting rules changed, reforestation rules and environmental attitudes changed, and now there are so many deer that they are a hazard on the highways as well as in the crops and the gardens.

Seniors for the Future

Where there is no deer population there is no report of Lyme disease.

My own brother, who has always been an environmentalist, and even when the deer were ruining his garden would not have killed them, has had to deal with the tick which causes Lyme disease. He was fortunate enough to catch it in time so that there was no long term effects.

Was it bad judgement to have encouraged the increase of deer population, and to restrict hunting? If we had an overview, or were farsighted enough to figure out future consequences, would we have done things differently and avoided the potential for this disease which is considered by some to be next to Aids in epidemic proportions?

Malaria, Filariasis, Chagas'

disease are some other diseases which, like Lyme disease, owe their alarming success to human made changes in the environment. These changes are often made with the very best intentions. For example, malaria has had a helping hand from the human attempts to civilize and reshape the tropics. Irrigation, and changing farming methods have been a great help to the malaria bearing mosquito. Examples could go on and on.

One of the most recent examples of doing good turning into bad results is found in the western society's urge to be helpful to the developing nations. Western methods which have worked so well for us have turned out to be disastrous for others. People in both developed and developing nations see the need to let the

developing nations work out their own methods with the help of, and the expertise of the developed nations.

The Christian Church has had to learn the same lessons in sharing the Good News. To share the news, and leave it for those who hear to develop it in their own way is not easy for this western society of ours. And it does not matter if the news is news of faith or news of industry.

And so, we seniors who have done the best we can, are now having the face the facts that that is not always good enough. We will have the wisdom to pass on to the younger generation the great need to have "an astronaut's view," that is, an overview which takes in all people and all situations, using lessons of the past to evaluate consequences for the future? Or, to put it another way, will we teach the following generations to be centred in others and the whole of the universe rather than in self and

self serving methods which bring power and prestige - the kind of power and prestige which spell disaster for the generations which follow?

I got the idea for this article from two differing sources. One was an article in the May/June 1990 issue of Equinox magazine, and the other was an article in my University of Toronto magazine. I am sure that most seniors have read articles for several years now which offered this type of information, but with the onset of Lyme disease in southern Ontario the reminders get closer and closer to home and seem to make the issue more imminent. Seniors, with their own time overview may be able to bring wisdom and hope into the situation for a younger generation, and still have a part to play in making the global village, which the media has made through communication, become a global village in relationship and common human support of one another.

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