

# Yes! to retirement



Helen Grace Lescheid

**R**etirement came so suddenly that it left me reeling.

I must admit, thoughts of retirement had crossed my mind. But I loved my nursing job and my patients, and I intended to work until the mandatory cutoff age at 65. That would give me a few more years to prepare myself emotionally. I would then gently close that chapter of my life and begin another one.

But retirement came the day I lost my job.

The first few days I felt lost. How I missed the daily routine of

putting on my uniform, going to my office, and interacting with patients and staff! And I worried how I was going to pay my mortgage, taxes, and other daily needs.

One day I realized I could let this defeat me or I could rise above it. The power to live fully lay in my attitude. God had other works for me to do; it was for me to find them. My motto became: Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

For some years I'd wanted to write a book—a biography of my mother's life. Why not now? The doctor had diagnosed breast cancer and it seemed like my mother might not be with us much longer. I began to study her Russian Mennonite history, hauled out my notes taken over the years of listening to family tales and the scribbler of her memoirs she'd given me earlier. One day I was able to present a published copy of *Lead, Kindly Light* to her. How delighted we were when a publisher in Germany wanted to publish it in the German language as well.

Mother recovered from breast cancer and lived a few more years. Then pancreatic cancer invaded her body. Realizing the doctors had

done all they could, we brought her home from the hospital. Now my nursing experience came in handy: I organized a nursing team around the clock. How precious were the times at her bedside when she confided in me secrets she'd not felt free to talk about before. The experience of nursing Mother at home cemented our family together. Her grandchildren flew in from far away places to spend a few more hours with "Grandma." She'd struggle out of bed and sit at the kitchen table with them while they encouraged her to "tell us about when . . ."

God also took care of my financial needs—often in surprising ways. I'd sell an article or get an

editing job. Focusing on my blessings, not my needs, brought a deep inner contentment.

Saying yes! to retirement has meant writing three more books (see [www.helenlescheid.com](http://www.helenlescheid.com)), speaking at different functions, teaching a women's Bible study, traveling to many parts of the world (mostly to see my children), and volunteering at Gleaners where senior retirees, like me, make soup mixes for the hungry people of the world.

My life is rich and full of varied activities. And it all came when I said, "I will not let this defeat me. I will rise above it and find the works God still has for me to do." ✍

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***I will rise above it and find the works  
God still has for me to do.***

