

THOUGHTS ON TURNING 65

We have a tradition in our family which produces a rhyme for each birthday that we celebrate. Mine for this year is, "Turning 65, giving thanks for being alive." I used to think that when I turned 65 I'd be old, but I certainly don't feel old, and I hope that I don't think or act old. I am intentional about keeping up with the times that my ministry might be relevant in reaching new generations with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our 3 children are all in their 30's, and I am very aware of what stirs their souls in worship and service. Each one desires to grow closer to God and live out their calling to serve God. Each one is moved by a different type of music, preaching, teaching, programming and fellowship. Some would say, "Let them adjust to the way we do things in our church," while others would work to shape experiences which honor our children's particular gifts, graces and needs. Bishop Hopkins would refer to the later as the church's ability to be nimble in responding to the cry of the younger generations who long to know God.

As I turn 65, I look forward to live whatever life remains for me on this earth committing all of my energy and gifts to reaching persons with the life-giving, life-saving message of Christ. I know that this will bring clashes and heated discussions with some who say, "Let them adjust to the way we do things in our church. It was good enough for us, so it should be good enough for them." Nevertheless, I will endeavor to follow the One who left the inflexible temple and took the gospel to the streets where people lived, worked and came to faith in the God who made room for everyone who desired to be fully alive.

Valerie