

The Continuing Journey of the Molinar Team

Ageing in Grace

One of our dearest friends called our attention to a classic old movie, *Love amongst the Ruins*, with two classic old actors, Katherine Hepburn and Lawrence Olivier. His words to her at the movie's end were, **"Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be!"** (Browning) How True?

We were at a talk given to the residents of this retirement estate where we live. It was given by ADASA (Association of Dementia & Alzheimer's South Africa). The notice distributed started off with a quote from Johns Hopkins University: *"Research from Johns Hopkins Medicine shows that hearing loss significantly raises the risk of developing dementia. Mild hearing loss doubles the risk, moderate loss triples it, and severe hearing impairment makes a person up to five times more likely to develop cognitive decline."*

Those two statements caught my eye: **Hearing loss & Dementia**. I had been nagging Tom about his 'selective' negative lack of hearing (mainly from his "dear wife.") And, of course, "Dementia," but sadly, this has had a strong negative stigma. It was simply nothing more than the ageing process of man's earthly bod, but a subject no one wishes to discuss.

ADASA was able to present the subject of dementia in a way that made sense. There is such a needless stigma that often comes with such terms as Dementia and Alzheimer's, usually from fear or lack of knowledge, or both. Our hope and prayers are to alleviate and possibly clarify some of the uncertainties of such a "doleful" name of, *Dementia*. At the bottom of this short "Report" we have included an "Umbrella of Dementia," distributed by ADASA.

Tom's rationale: As long as he could sit in his study and prepare classes to teach, what's the need of *hearing aids*? Right? When it came time to teach, and when he had questions from students in the back of the class, he would walk to the back of the class so as to hear the student. Now that was easy enough! **But Dementia! Whoa!!** Now that's another story. That subject even caught Tom's attention. The study said, *"Hearing loss can contribute to Dementia."* Apparently, part of the brain that can't hear goes to sleep, becomes lazy and is negatively affected.

Now Tom wears hearing aids (when he remembers 😊), it's barely noticeable. But now he can be assured that not only will he hear the person who is asking the question, but he will more likely remember the class, student's name, and the event for a longer period of time.

Cheryl's rationale: For many years I suspected I had a form of dementia. My mother passed away from Alzheimer's in 2010, and my medical and genetic histories clearly pointed to it. To not have control of one's mind can be devastating for many. It was for me when I first thought I had it. I sobbed my heart out to the Father saying, "anything but this, please." But finally coming to the realisation that my body was not my own, but rather, belonging to my Creator and Sovereign Lord, I accepted it. That's when I had peace of soul. Yet, I still had no confirmation until this time, Saturday 25th 2026. ADASA referred me to a neurologist who conducted an MRI brain scan concluding, *"mild age-appropriate involutional change is demonstrated of the brain, with Fazekas grade 1 small vessel ischaemic changes in the centrum semiovale."* Wow! And all that worry was for nothing! Finally confirming that *"it was indicative of early Alzheimer's disease."* Thank You. That's All I wanted to know.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of **timidity (fear)**, but of **power** and **love** and **discipline**.

Whatever the Father places in front of His children, there is always a specific purpose. Rather, realise the **reason** for our circumstance. It's a matter of simply placing trust in Him. Our bodies are weakening in some form or another as long as we are on this condemned earth?

The several promises and rationales given us, has held Tom and me through many a time of "ailing & adversity," for when we understand the reason of why and what we are going through, and **THANK** God for it, no matter what, then the load is made easier and God is glorified.

Since there is no suffering in heaven, God can only demonstrate His grace provision through suffering while on earth. It is one of God's objectives to show you grace in all circumstances. (Rev 21:4; Psalm102:1-3). (R. B. Thieme Jr)

Don't focus on the circumstances or on self. Keep your eyes on the Lord's provisions. He has allowed the affliction to increase confidence in the Lord and He says, "My Grace is sufficient for you" (2 Corinthians.12:9 & Philippians.4:11-13) (From Rick Hughes – March 2023, in the throes of his Parkinson's)

"It is in the quiet crucible of your personal, private sufferings that your noblest dreams are born, and God's greatest gifts are given in compensation for what you've been through."

Quote from Whintley Phipps, who sings the composition, "It is Well with My Soul," by Horatio Spafford.

What God does not remove, He expects us to endure. For then He is gloried, as we become His Witness for the Prosecution, to both man and angels!! Suffering is an opportunity to fall back on the grace of God.

For men and angels watch us: ***1 Corinthians 4:9: We are made a spectacle to the whole Universe, to angels as well as to human beings.*** Why? To glorify God in our lives by demonstrating His Love, His Righteousness and His Justice, in and through each of His children. But we need to understand the reasons we go through these circumstances. When asking God to "remove" some adversity, we fail to see His Grace in His answer. Rather, thank Him for whatever is placed across our paths. His Plan is perfect!!

Our prayer is simply this: ***Philippians 1:20-21: I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.***

Our hearts are overwhelmed with gratitude for all of you who have carried us through these years in prayer.

All we can say is, Thank You!!

Only because of His overwhelming Grace!

Tom & Cheryl



Dementia

An umbrella term used to describe a collection of brain diseases and their symptoms, which include: memory loss, impaired judgment, personality changes, and an inability to perform daily activities.



Alzheimer's Disease

Prevalence

60-70% of dementia cases

Characterized by

Amyloid plaques and beta tangles.

Symptoms include

Impairments in memory, language, and visuospatial skills.



Vascular Dementia

Prevalence

10-20% of dementia cases

Characterized by

Disease or injury to the blood vessels leading to the brain.

Symptoms include

Impaired motor skills and judgement.



Frontotemporal Dementia

Prevalence

10% of dementia cases

Characterized by

Deterioration of frontal and temporal lobes of the brain.

Symptoms include

Personality changes and issues with language.



Lewy Body Dementia

Prevalence

5% of dementia cases

Characterized by

Lewy body protein deposits on nerve cells.

Symptoms include

Hallucinations, disordered sleep, impaired thinking and motor skills.



Other Dementias

Prevalence

5% of dementia cases

Dementias related to

- Parkinson's disease
- Huntington's disease
- HIV
- Crutzfeldt-Jakob disease
- Korsakoff syndrome