

Focus on Older People Information Bulletin No.22

April 2008



The Sheffield Centre
Church Army's Research Unit

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Mission to the newly retired or SAGA generation

I am frequently asked for examples of good practice in reaching this age cohort or links to people who are. Here is my reply to one recent correspondent:

Reaching the new old is still a concept or theory still very much ahead of the practice. But since the Sheffield Centre have raised the issues, through my *Discovering Faith in Later Life Series No 6: Cultural shifts in younger old* (available for download on the Sheffield Centre's web site) people are now beginning to be challenged by this. The research in this area is still very much in its infancy and we also would like answers from pioneers such as you for models of good practice.

I believe that reaching men is one way forward e.g. 'men's sheds' 'men's breakfasts' and engaging the young old in volunteer work maximizing their skills and experience in pursuits that benefit society. The Wycliffe

Centre for instance are beginning to engage older people by encouraging them to take a 'gap year' between giving up paid employment and settling down into retirement.

One way forward I would think would be to find out what the young old are doing in your area – what are their interests? What are their networks? Where do they hang out? Some kind of survey is required to find some answers, and then begin the process of building relationships and make connections. We call it 'double listening' listen to the context and listen to God. Explore what God might already be doing in these networks and join in. Perhaps you could engage the students on placement with you in an adventure of this kind to explore and discover!

These are my initial thoughts – what a wonderful opportunity you have to kick start something!

Learning in Later Life: "In full bloom & or withering on the vine?"

Wednesday 7th May 2008, 09:45 - 15:30,
St George's Conference Centre
Great George Street
Leeds, LS1 3BR

Participants fee: £50.00 (Lunch included. NIACE does not charge VAT)

Given the Government's recent consultation paper on Informal Learning, this conference will identify the significant issues for older learners. The conference will provide opportunities to discuss the issues and compile an agreed statement on the benefits of learning for older people that will be used to lobby and campaign for more, different and better learning opportunities for older learners.

This conference is being organised jointly by NIACE, Our Voice - Regional Learner Panel Yorkshire and the Humber, LinkAge-Plus and The Leeds Older People's Forum. It will provide opportunities to hear from key policy makers and thinkers, ask them questions and to discuss the issues in a challenging but supportive atmosphere.

Audience

The event will be of interest to practitioners, policy makers, providers of learning opportunities, agencies supporting older people and advocates for older people.

To apply for a place online:

Log onto www.niace.org.uk/conferences

For more information on this conference, download the conference programme from www.niace.org.uk/conferences

Tel: 0116 204 2833

E-mail: gurjit.kaur@niace.org.uk

Background

In January 2008 the Government issued a consultative paper on informal learning. The paper suggests that we may be trapped in an outdated model of adult learning, based too much on formal classrooms and publicly funded programmes, and that a more effective strategy might involve making the service more learner led, with a stronger infrastructure to organise services, rather than directly subsidising courses themselves.

Policy changes in recent years have placed great significance on learning which is related directly or indirectly to employment. Much adult funding is directed to programmes which have specifically vocational outcomes. What has this done to provision for older learners, whose primary learning goals might not be related to finding or keeping a job, but more associated with learning for leisure, fun, social purposes and intellectual stimulation.



Older, Richer, Fitter...

Insensitive or unaware?

Throughout the world, industry seems insensitive to or unaware of the needs of older people when it comes to the *design* of products. This is even despite the publicity the ageing population has received over a number of years.

David Metz and Michael Underwood point out in their recent book **Older Richer Fitter** (published by Age Concern) stats from a recent survey by an EU-funded Senior Watch project. It showed that the 10,000 European seniors over the age of 50 interviewed all thought that their interests in adequate design were not considered by manufacturers of IT products, and more than 70 per cent perceived the media as associating these technologies only with young people.

An earlier design council study found that only about a third of the UK FTSE 100 companies were aware of older users. Similar attitudes are reported from the USA.

Older Richer Fitter provides an in-depth analysis of older consumers covering key areas such as:

- Changes in demographics
- Contemporary view on ageing
- Segmenting the older market
- Business sectors key to the older user

Other statistical information is available from the Office of National Statistics (1999) Social Focus on Older People, London, The Stationary Office. Also 'United Kingdom population trends in the 21st Century', Population Trends Vol.103, Spring.

Older Richer Fitter is available from Age Concern England:
Website: www.ageconcern.or.uk
Tel: 020 8765 7452

Worship on the net for older people

David Metz and Michael Under Wood in *Older Richer Poorer* also point to an interesting development in worship on the Internet in the USA and parts of Europe with low population densities and scattered communities (eg Finland). Church services are videoed for transmission live over the Internet or for playback on demand at a time that is more convenient. Sermons, church and community notices are also available for download. Not only does this enable people to take part in services in the community that they might not otherwise be able to do but it also provides them with a greater degree of choice and the possibility join services in other countries.

They also make mention of the fact that the Baby Boomer Bistro created by Age Concern was the first chat site in the UK developed specifically for people over 50. It offers chatters a chance to meet and make friends around the world. It also allows politicians, decision-makers and experts in many different fields to hear the voices of older people via a variety of special virtual events.

Lacking staff resources?

Self help groups such as that provided by the University of the Third Age (U3A) have become very popular. There are over 200 groups in Britain an excess of 40,000 members. The self-help movement for senior adult education is now common phenomenon worldwide.

Workshops

PSALM Workshops

Let your 'yes' be 'yes', and your 'no' be 'no'; Assertiveness in later life

This is a one day workshop offered by PSALM: Taking ageing and faith seriously. It will take place on Tuesday 15th April 2008 11.00am – 3.30pm. The workshop will be led by Roy Gregory, Church Pastor & Spiritual Director at St Pancras Church House, 1 Lancing Street, NW1 1NA.

Also: **Where shall I begin: downsizing & de-cluttering in later life** is another workshop same venue taking place on Friday 16th May 2008.

Further details and booking forms from:

PSALM
The Gallery
St Pancras Church
Euston Road
London, NW1 2BA
Email office@stpancraschurch.org
or leave a message on 020 7388 5658



The **New Dynamics of Ageing (NDA)** programme is a seven year multidisciplinary research initiative with the ultimate aim of improving quality of life of older people. The programme is a unique collaboration between five UK Research Councils - ESRC, EPSRC, BBSRC, MRC and AHRC - and is the largest and most ambitious research programme on ageing ever mounted in the UK...
website is <http://newdynamics.group.shef.ac.uk/>

Twelve projects are to share £3 million in new grants to support the research in all aspects of aging including behavioural, biological, clinical, cultural, historical, social, economic and technological, through direct engagement with older people and user organisations.

Fresh Horizons

Fresh Horizons is a day conference run by the Baptist Union of Great Britain Mission Department via associations and churches, and at their invitation. This conference aims to explore the challenges and opportunities for third-age seniors in mission and ministry, through video, testimony, biblical reflection, humour and dialogue. A power point presentation is also available for purchase on DVD.

Details of planned courses on enquiries about running a Fresh Horizons Day from:

Carole Alder
Tel: 01235 517713
Email calder@baptist.org.uk



Films & Resources...

What do you see?

This is a powerful short film ideal for training purposes especially for those working in the context of hospitals and care facilities.

The film by Amanda Waring takes a journey through the day in the life of an elderly stroke victim Elsie, starring Virginia McKenna. Elsie in her inner thoughts craves for compassion and understanding of the person she is inside. Elsie unable to speak makes a silent but heartfelt plea to her carers to "look closer...see...me." A poem on which this film is based written by Phyllis McCormack begins:

What do you see nurse, what do you see?
What are you thinking when you look at me?
A crabbit old woman, not very wise...

To order this film email your request to dvd@amandawarring.com or send a cheque for £9.99 made out to Looking for Magic Ltd with your name and address to:

Becketts, Tripp Hill
Fittleworth
West Sussex, RH20 1ER

The film is sponsored by Help the Aged and Macmillan Cancer relief.

Young at Heart

Young at Heart is a film probably due out in April about a group of old people doing a tour of punk songs. An ideal tool for reaching the SAGA generation!

"A crowd-pleaser in the best sense, this alternately hilarious and heartbreaking movie will send you out of the theatre with a new lease of life". – David Ansen, Newsweek.

Website: www.foxsearchlight.com/youngatheart

The best activity resources for older people in one place

The Winslow Catalogue; Education, Special Needs, Health and Rehabilitation.

Website: www.winslow-cat.com/cgi-bin/Winslow.storefront

Tel: 0845 230 2777

Email: sales@winslow-cat.com

Musical Bingo

A novel way of playing Bingo that might be of interest to activity organisers available from Speechmark Publishing. See www.speechmark.net for other resource ideas.



New Website For Vox

VOX (Valuing Older eXperience), linking Christian agencies committed to working with older people in mission and care, has launched a **new website** which it is hoped will develop to serve the church, provide ideas and contacts for resourcing and organising conferences. The address is: www.valuingolderexperience.co.uk

The aim of VOX is not to compete with the organisations that sponsor this website, but we hope to complement and celebrate the existing work that is carried out across the UK in valuing the experience of older people. Through VOX we hope to provide a focal point that will enable the voice of the organisations involved, to extend their sphere of influence in order that we can help to create "**A world that reflects God's view of growing older**".

Changing Demography of the UK

National Statistics has published its annual snapshot in population trends. Age-related data includes:

- The UK population aged 65 and over will increase by 63% to 15.8 million (22% of the population) by 2031; under – 16s will rise only 11% to 12.8 million (18% of the population).
- Over – 85s are expected to double to 2.9 million (4% of the population) by 2031.

(Source: Population Trends No 130)

www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=6303

Heyday

Heyday Age Concern's magazine released in May 2006 appears to be struggling. ThirdSector, an online social work journal states that Age Concern England has bowed to the inevitable and abandoned its attempts to recruit 'younger old' people to Heyday, which it founded to provide information, services and a political voice to the soon-to-be-retired.

For more information and a variety of articles, please follow this link: www.thirdsector.co.uk/archive. If that doesn't work, please contact me and I'll send the full link to you by e-mail.

Why not encourage the development of self-help groups in your parish or circuit?

Mutual aid groups can be used for bringing about spiritual, personal, and social change for older people as more people in this age group are becoming increasingly vocal in their endeavour to clarify their needs and to attain their goals.

They can be used to empower older people to develop their confidence, independence and autonomy in danger of escaping from their control, often leading to feelings of frustration, powerlessness, isolation and even depression. Older people are being conditioned to believe that they are a spent force. Newly retired people especially, are an untapped source of potential inside and outside the church.



Your Letters

Re SAGA generation

We are about to start a first attempt to reach this generation with a monthly lunch club on the small housing estate where we have suitable facilities to do this; Called KNOBS (Knocking On a Bit), 2 course lunch for £3, tea & coffee on tap, afternoon entertainment, some kind of "thought for the month".

Our first date is 31st March. No idea what will happen. It is being incorporated into the weekly Women's Fellowship which has been running for many years on a Monday afternoon; the idea being that these older Christian ladies might get friendly with local people who come along. Will report on how it goes in due course.

Helen Santos,
(The Gateway, Snow Hill, Bath)
part of Walcot St. Swithin's parish.

Dear Mike

I have just received a copy of your very helpful information bulletin through the Baptist Union. I would be very grateful to receive the bulletin direct in future if this is possible.

We are currently in the process of expanding a visiting scheme for older people from covering one town locally, to a much larger area through a partnership between 15 churches. We have just taken on a part-time coordinator and currently visit around 50 residents between the various volunteers involved. We also hope to soon be hearing about funding from the local authority to enable the scheme to develop further.

Thanks a lot,

Jeremy Sharpe
Community Development Worker

Mike Collyer comment:

Thank you to many of our readers who responded to my request for examples of ministry with and to those in early retirement.

While acknowledging that loads of activities and pastoral care is being provided for those aged 80 and over; it has confirmed my suspicion that there are very few examples generally speaking, of ministry to and with young old.

The church has yet to respond to the huge demographic change taking place in our society. It seems that theory is still very much ahead of the practice in mission strategy suitable for this age group.

We wish Helen well in her pioneering project.

Mike

Network Church For The Elderly Housebound

Mrs Trish Clavert runs the Church of the Good Shepherd, a **network church for the elderly housebound** described as a 'virtual chapel'. The following statement was sent to me by Andrew Roberts, Fresh Expression Missioner, Wolverhaddon and Shrewsbury Methodist District Mission Enabler:

"If you thought fresh expressions were just about teenagers, data projectors and the music of Matt Redman, think again! In rural Shropshire a new fresh expression is growing for the elderly, infirm and housebound. Dubbed a 'virtual' chapel by the Shrewsbury Circuit, the Good Shepherd congregation is congregating in a new way."

In July 2006 Trish Clavert (an Anglican layperson) was commissioned by the Circuit to bring the church to the people. This Trish does through spiritual care with regular pastoral visit to the members' homes for fellowship, worship and Holy Communion.

Increasingly members are inviting their friends and neighbours to share in the life of the 'virtual chapel', so the Good Shepherd is very much a mission shaped church. Good shepherd members stay connected to the wider church through Trish's ministry and the sharing of recorded services, DVDs and newsletters.

The silver grey harvest field is a large and growing field in this country. Maybe your Circuit, [area, parish or deanery] like the Shrewsbury Circuit could start a fresh expression for those of more mature years.

'The harvest field is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field'. (Luke 10:2)

Aging church congregations viewed as disastrous!

Quadrant (May 2008) a bi-monthly bulletin of research-based information reports on the aging of churchgoers. It points out that the average age of churchgoers is rapidly increasing. It was 47 for congregations in Great Britain in 2005, but is likely to be 67 by 2050 if present trends continue.

A quote from the article: *"That is simply disastrous, both for services, community activity, church fellowship and virtually everything that the church stands for."*

This last statement is outrageous and institutionally ageist. Aging congregations should not be a problem to the church **but a challenge!**

The article goes on to argue that a key strategic priority is the crucial need to engage with younger people and children, and to do it now. What about mission strategies to reach the increasing mass of recently retired people who within a short space of time **become bored out of their minds?**



A New Publication from Church Army & the Leveson Centre

A Mission-shaped Church for Older People? Practical Suggestions for Local Churches

Edited by Michael Collyer, Claire Dalpra, Alison Johnson & James Woodward
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This new resource is a joint venture through close collaboration between Church Army and the Leveson Centre for the Study of Ageing, Spirituality and Social Policy. It includes some of the material from an earlier Church Army manual, revised and updated, together with a considerable number of newly written chapters covering a wide range of relevant topics resulting from the first hand experience of the authors.

The publication costs only £10.00 including postage and packing. Orders enclosing a cheque payable to The Foundation of Lady Katherine Leveson should be sent to the address below. Alternatively copies can be ordered on line using a credit card on the Leveson Centre website www.levesoncentre.org.uk

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From the Foreward by Dr John Sentamu, Archbishop of York:

Contrary to what is often thought, growth in church attendance among the older age-groups is not keeping up with the demographic changes. So the writers of this extremely helpful book have set about to help us think of the issues, problems and opportunities posed by an ageing population and to inspire us into action.

... [It] contains a whole range of helpful material which should be placed in the hands of anyone who ministers among older people: the range is quite extraordinary.

**The Sheffield Centre
Church Army's Research Unit**



Mike with the Sheffield Centre team, January 2008.

Mike is on the left, then Andrew Wooding, Laurence Keith, Claire Dalpra, George Lings and Steve Hollinghurst.

Michael Collyer CA

Researcher: Older People
Exploring evangelism, spiritual needs and
fresh expressions of church among older people

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