

## The Second Half of Life

Written by Mission

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Whilst there is a tendency amongst younger people to think that anyone over 60 is old, the third and fourth-age groups are very distinctive from each other and present very different needs. To offer the same service or activities to those in the third and fourth-age groups is like expecting young children and teenagers to have the same interests and needs.

**Third Agers** are people who have moved into retirement and who are active and independent. They are able to contribute to the community, including through the life of the church. However, they may also be dealing with a number of life changes, eg no longer having the 'status' of working, being the 'sandwich' generation caring for grandchildren and elderly parents, facing the loss of spouses and friends, and for some a huge loss of income.

Many third agers have had links with the church in childhood and earlier adulthood, but have drifted away. There are a number of creative ways to re-engage them.

**Baby Boomers** are a distinct and very large sociological group, born post the Second World War up to 1964. They are now starting to become Third Agers but need to be regarded differently from the Third Agers that have gone before them.

**Fourth Agers** are older people who have become dependent on others for at least some aspects of their lives. It is not appropriate to put an age in years on this group since there is much individual variation. About 4% of Fourth Agers are in residential and nursing homes, and chaplaincy, regular visits and services in the homes can be a great blessing to the residents who easily lose touch with the churches they may have attended for many years. For the majority of Fourth Agers living at home, church people will have to be pro-active in maintaining

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existing church links for them. New links can also be made through a variety of activities and events.

It should never be assumed that Third Agers and Fourth Agers have already reached decisions about their faith just because they are older. As with any other age groups, opportunities need to be provided to enable individuals to ask questions, share doubts, explore worries about the future, and to hear the gospel message in a relevant way.



### [The Outlook Trust](#)

- Provides encouragement, inspiration and the enabling of evangelism and mission to anyone who answers God's call to work among those of older age.
- Encourages older people to make the most of their lives for God.
- Promotes evangelism.
- Shares best practice and equips individuals and churches with up-to-date
- Resources like 'fun with a purpose.'
- Networks with organisations who have the same 'mind and purpose.'

In 2012, Outlook Trust are holding a Mini-Conference on 31 March at Redhill Baptist Church  
In 2013, Outlook Trust will hold a Residential Conference 25-28 June at Kings Park, Northampton.

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Find out more on the [Outlook Trust website](#) .

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