



AGELESS

MINISTRY TO AND BY THE AGEING NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2010

Seniors Connecting 2010!

CHATSWOOD
Saturday 13 March

St Paul's
Anglican Church
Fullers Road, Chatswood

Parking in grounds,
entry from View Street

***THIS PROGRAM WILL BE
REPEATED LATER IN THE
YEAR IN THE SOUTHERN
REGION – DATE AND
VENUE TO BE ANNOUNCED***

Come and hear three experienced women sharing their knowledge on various aspects of ministry with seniors

Margot Higgins
The Recently Retired

Margaret Hutchison
Recruiting/Training

Janice Ackland
Programming Events

Program commences at **10am**. Registration from 9.45am. Admission by donation. The event will conclude at **12.45pm**. Morning Tea provided.

To register contact:
Joy Austin 9746 8620
OR Joan Hartley 9599 6112



The three TABA events held in 2009 were well attended. As usual events were held in different areas of the diocese so that a maximum number of people could attend.

The first at Narrabeen in March featured John Chapman on ***Making the Most of the Rest of Your Life***.

Bishop Harry Goodhew introduced us to the ***Generation Gap*** at Engadine in May and Ryde (pictured) in September.

Meetings were held on Saturday mornings, concluding at 12.30pm, allowing busy people to make better use of the day. We are, therefore, continuing to use similar time slots for 2010.

*The righteous will flourish... they will still bear fruit in old age,
they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, "The Lord is upright."*

PSALM 92:12a, 14-15a

Never too late!

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Some children touring a retirement home were asked by a resident if they had any questions. “Yes,” responded one little girl, “how old are you?” “I’m 98,” she replied. The little girl’s eyes grew wide with wonder. “Did you start at one?” she asked.

Well of course she *did* start there as we all do, and from the moment we are born we are growing old! But that thought need not daunt us because it actually puts things in proper perspective. Life is a continuum – a work in progress. There is no stage that is not significant and valuable; certainly not our older years. Obsolescence is not our Creator’s design for us, whatever human society in our day and culture may decree. During all our time on earth, he has a role and a purpose for us.

There is a lot to be said for getting older. From the time we enter this world we begin to learn from our experience of life. By the time we reach our older years we have grown a great deal in our understanding of people, ourselves, and if we are in God’s family, in knowledge and understanding of him also. Whatever our circumstances, we go on experiencing life, reflecting on our experiences, thus learning, and growing as long as we live. That is why growing older never means becoming obsolete or ‘past our use by date’ as the jokers say. Rather it can and should mean learning, serving, venturing, finding purpose and fulfillment in life to the end of our days.

There is some good evidence that our greatest contribution may come in our later years. Inspiring stories of achievements by older people abound. **George Burns** the entertainer made a comeback at **78** years old with the movie *The Sunshine Boys*. He also wrote a book called *How to Live to 100*, and once remarked, “I have made old age so fashionable, people can’t wait to get there!” **President Ronald Reagan** was **69** years old when he was elected to the presidency of the USA. When he was **65**, **Harland Sanders** turned a one man store into Kentucky Fried Chicken which now has thousands of stores worldwide. **Winston Churchill** made his greatest contribution to history from age **66**. **Moses** was **80** when he led the Jewish people out of Egypt.

So what can we reasonably expect to achieve in our later years? It is important that we are not deceived by the stereotypes or expectations of the ill informed or prejudiced members of our society. It is now recognized that older people can learn new things including skills with apparent ease.

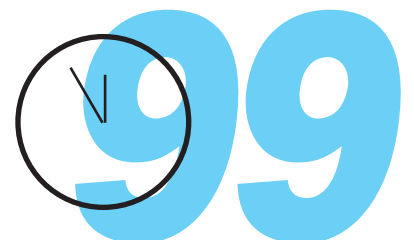
These days many people in their seventies and eighties are doing university courses. In extensive tests, younger and older people have shown only minimal differences in learning abilities. Today’s seniors are remarrying, taking up new jobs and interests, and basically starting new lives. More and more Christian seniors are using their lifetime skills, talents and expertise, in mission and in local church ministry. In doing so they are enriching the lives of others, and connecting with their peers outside the church to communicate and demonstrate their Christian faith.

The Bible has a lot of positive things to say about older people. Verse 14 in Psalm 92 says **“They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.”** In Job 12:12 we read, **“With the aged is wisdom, and in the length of days, understanding”** and 32:37 **“Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.”** Modern research backs this up, claiming that we reach the peak of our wisdom at around 60.

The real truth is that we are meant to live life as fully as possible at any stage and age. The contribution we can make to those coming after us can be great. King David prayed, **“When I am old and grey headed, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare your strength to this generation.”** David Roper writing of this verse said, “Our greatest usefulness may be to pass on our understanding of God to others.” God does have a purpose for *each day* of our lives and it is not over until the time he has appointed for us to pass from this life into eternity.

Margaret Hutchison

*Pastoral worker,
Turramurra,
and TABA
Committee Member*



God's Purpose for an Octogenarian

MINISTERING TO WOMEN IN MYANMAR

***Norma, I don't know how you do it?
You're so brave, especially at your age!***

This is the remark I hear so often from people and they say it kindly but in a way that makes me feel I am Mrs Superwoman. If they only knew that, left to my own feelings, I feel absolutely the opposite! Early this year I became an octogenarian. I did not want it to happen but it just did! I did not want it to happen for many reasons.

Firstly, society thinks I am too old to be travelling and, if I am, why am I going to a third world country like Myanmar (used to be Burma) where the illegal military junta are so repressive, the people are so poor and it's very dangerous for Christians to be spreading the gospel! I have a simple answer, because God wants me to and I rely entirely on His guidance, strength, courage and power. I am not 'superwoman', left to what I want to do I wouldn't do it.

Secondly, society (even Christians) think it time to rest and get ready for the hereafter. All these things I am doing but God seems to have another agenda as well for me.

It was while we were in Singapore (with CMS) in the 1990s and my husband, Bill, was teaching at Trinity Theological College, that we met and ministered to many Myanmar students and some of their wives. I also taught a large group of Myanmar women in a Bible Study group on Sunday afternoons. We came to love these people and we began to learn of the terrible things that were happening in their country and what was happening to Christians there and also of their extreme poverty. We discovered that despite the fact that they had had so little Bible teaching (the country being closed to missionaries since late 60s and no Christian resources allowed into the country) they loved the Lord and God was still working despite the dreadful repression in their country. We also held a prayer meeting in our home every week for the Myanmar people with those who could attend. They kept asking us if one day (when it became possible) to come

to their country and teach the Bible. It did come in 1994. The military government announced it was opening the country to tourism. My husband said 'Now is the time!' My reply was 'I am too old!' 'Never too old, go!' This will be the seventh time I have been and each time before I go all sorts of obstacles come to try and prevent me. But I always make it because it is God's will.

It is such a joy and a privilege to go and teach these women. They come from all over the country and some have travelled several days to get there. Standing up front teaching (we are interpreted) it is a joy to see these women (over 300) sitting with Bibles open, listening intently, taking the opportunity they so rarely get to be taught God's Word in depth. Each day is long. They rise at 6am, have a service in the church, then have breakfast, duties and then the conference starts at 8.30am. Except for several short breaks and lunch, they are happy to sit and be taught.

There are so many other overwhelming needs in this poor, repressed and oppressed country and we try to help them in so many ways as well. We try to help the sick, the poor, the widows, the orphans in a small way. However, we realize that the most important thing for us to do in the short time we are there is to build up and strengthen the Christians. In a country where Christianity is just tolerated (they are not allowed to evangelize or build new churches) we feel the most important priority is to teach the Word of God and to strengthen them in their daily walk with God.

So, I am testifying to the fact that I am not a superwoman, it is God who does it all. You can with God's strength do more than you think possible if you do it for Him. I praise Him that He gives me the desire and strength to serve Him by ministering to these dear women and I do praise Him for the opportunity to do this even at my age.

Norma Dumbrell
Caringbah



Never too late

to acknowledge Jesus as Saviour & Lord!

A friend of mine was asked to speak at a meeting in another parish, concerned with Connect 09 outreach. There she met a lady she had known for many years, a fine person, actively engaged in her parish. After the meeting the lady said to my friend, "While you were speaking, I suddenly realised that I was not the Christian I had always thought I was. I had not put my faith in Jesus to know the certainty of sins forgiven. I have done that now -- asked Jesus into my heart as Saviour and Lord." The lady concerned is 94!

It is never too old to come to the Saviour.

(contributed by Leonie Armour)

One of the most important tasks of ageing is to review the whole of our lives and deal with any unresolved issues.

This is the time to truly find peace

with God, ourselves and others

as we come to an ever deepening understanding of God's great mercy

and unconditional love

which does not depend at all

on either our failures or successes.

(from "Spiritual Direction with the Ageing" – Doreen Riddell)

The world does not read the Bible, but it reads you and me. Does it see you **grow** like Peter, **glow** like Stephen, **go** like Paul? If not, ask God to make you a person in whom the world can see what He can do with a yielded life.

"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." 2 Corinthians 3:5

Father, thank You that we need not force ourselves to be and do something special. Thank You that You will do that in us which is pleasing to You. Make us willing to let You do whatever You think necessary.

(Corrie ten Boom – "This Day is the Lord's")



CENTRE for AGEING
and PASTORAL STUDIES

5TH NATIONAL CAPS CONFERENCE

28 September to 1 October 2010

University House, Canberra

Ageing & Spirituality:

*Resistance, Resilience
and Change*

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**The editor welcomes contributions to AGELESS.
Our readers are vitally interested in obtaining fresh
ideas for their outreach to seniors.**

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