

Outlook

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST AMONG PEOPLE OVER 55

SUMMER 2006

OPPORTUNITY AGE – MEET THE SHEPHERD

In March 2005 the Department of Work and Pensions published a report entitled Opportunity Age – Opportunity and security throughout life. In his foreword to this document Tony Blair wrote, “As life expectancy increases and the birth rate remains low, the proportion of the population aged over 65 will increase dramatically. An ageing society is too often – and wrongly – seen solely in terms of increasing dependency. ...as older people become an ever more significant proportion of the population, society will increasingly depend upon the contribution they can make”. Nowhere is that more apparent than on God’s harvest field.

The Outlook Vision



I keep being drawn back to the importance of VISION. Crowds of older people. A sea of souls. Sheep without a shepherd. Human beings in need of leadership. People from all walks of life, searching for the meaning of life, and seeking to satisfy their spiritual hunger. We are born body and soul. Our souls have needs that are vital to our spiritual well-being. Needs that can only be satisfied by a personal encounter with the shepherd of the sheep, Jesus Christ, whereas our bodies provide a vehicle, “a wheelbarrow”,

whereby our souls may see and communicate with the physical world. The soul uses the body to express itself physically. When we die our earthly bodies decay, but our souls continue to be associated with our personalities which live on. Jesus comes to offer us a real choice, new birth into a living hope through his resurrection, and an inheritance that can never perish spoil or fade (1 Pet 1:3,4). The alternative is to be banished from God’s presence for all time into darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The choice is ours.

Unfortunately the human race is prone to “woolly thinking”. Many think they are Christians because they were brought up in a Christian home or attended church regularly, or have spent a lifetime doing good works. Many, even churchgoers, have no assurance of salvation, no Hope for the Future.

Outlook is developing as a Christian resource and training network, envisioning, encouraging

and enabling those called to share the Good News of Jesus Christ among people over 55 – an evangelistic agency stimulating churches to address the spiritual needs of older people.

If we are to achieve our mission of reaching older people with the Good News of Jesus Christ, then



we need workers, ordinary Christians willing to share their faith with others, Christians willing to resource this ministry financially. Ordinary people, no special training or skills, but people prepared to roll up their sleeves and get involved. Such people are in desperately short supply in organisations like Outlook. “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.” (Matthew 9:37). Our first priority is perhaps surprisingly a call to serious prayer. “Ask the Lord of the harvest, ...to send out workers.” Strategic planning, recruitment and training are vital, but this is God’s harvest and we are privileged to be his fellow workers.

Will you consider God’s call to make a start, or to release funds generously so that others might be sent? If you would like to become involved please contact David Heydon in the Outlook Office.

Outlook Members Realizing Opportunities

Vivienne Holloway:

Pioneering Senior Alpha for people aged 62 – 88!

Leading Alpha was a new experience for me and it was an enormous help to have attended the International Alpha Conference at Holy Trinity Brompton last November. I found it so inspiring to be among 700 delegates from all over the world, longing to be used by God to bring more people into the Kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ. There were seminars on 'Daytime Alpha' and 'Senior Alpha' plus a session with Nicky Gumbel, which were specially valuable for leaders. The programme for each session of the course with its guidance on timing was particularly useful for me. It covered everything from meeting with the team before the guests arrived, to prayers, notices, the recommendation of books and the inevitable joke!, ending with group time, team debriefing and prayer.

As this was a new venture for St Mary's in Haddenham the local Outlook team decided to hold an introductory coffee morning for the over 60's with the keynote talk being given by Fiona Castle. This attracted 50 people who heard a direct challenge to invite Jesus Christ into their lives. Eleven

people signed up for Senior Alpha, which began the following week.

We prayed for a suitable venue and God supplied the ideal home! Our hosts, husband and wife, were not themselves involved in the course. Guests experienced the love of Jesus personally as they arrived to a warm welcome and the smell of freshly brewed coffee.



Senior Alpha Team and Guests

The team arrived about 9.15 am and guests at 10 am. Coffee and cakes were served where the groups met to encourage the development of friendships.

Everyone came together at 10.30 am for a formal welcome and introduction to the day. Notices about Alpha were shared and various books recommended. We then sang a hymn from the CD Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus, which is available from the Outlook Trust office. Next came the edited DVD from Alpha (20 mins) and on one occasion our speaker, Rev Richard Zair, in person. Both the videos

and Richard come highly recommended. At each session a special effort was made to ensure that everyone could see and hear! After this there was group time with 5 or 6 guests, a group leader and two helpers. Although each session ended at midday, as the weeks progressed people seemed reluctant to leave. The Holy Spirit day was especially memorable as it reinforced the way the Spirit of God was moving in the lives of the guests during the course. It was held at a local retreat house in Stanton St John and is a vital part of the course.

There is to be a celebration lunch in our home when people will be asked to share how the course has affected them. Already we have started the follow-on course called 'A Life Worth Living', featuring Nicky Gumbel and based on Philippians. This is currently available on video and shortly to be produced on DVD as well. This is being held in the home of a lady who gave her life to Christ early in the course.

I have found pioneering this course, with the support of Churches Together in Haddenham an enormous privilege and utterly exhausting, but oh! SO worthwhile. We look forward to running another towards the end of the year and praise God for His loving presence and guidance throughout.

Beryl Catley: Coping as the years advance

Beryl has been an Outlook member for many years. She writes, "Although I am not housebound, I feel that some Outlook Trust folk will be facing such restrictions and probably cannot attend special events or gatherings that would inspire, and may feel a certain helplessness when challenged to reach others for Christ. However being housebound can sometimes provide the time to write letters to others needing to hear how faith can help them.

For many years, I have read the Christian Herald which has contained reviews of Christian books, and for the price of a postage stamp I have copied such book details on request cards for my local public library. Invariably, they have purchased the book, and after reading it, it is returned to the library bookshelves, where it is available to others. I was spurred on to this course of action when I saw the number of books on strange philosophies that were in the majority on the 'Religious' section. Indeed many local libraries welcome donations of books and magazines in good condition, so when disposing of your Christian books don't just think Oxfam, think public library too.

The Christian Herald is no longer published and has been replaced by 'Inspire', a 31 page booklet, which fits neatly into an envelope to post to a friend, and is interesting and should be acceptable even to the 'unchurched'.

Promoting your church's activities in the local press, is helpful and can also be done from home, with or without a computer! This participation can help the writer to feel involved and aware of events and prayer needs as they arise. Many Outlook folk will be prayer partners and have links with others through this – another activity for those confined to home.

The church to which I belong, Hivings Park Free Church, Chesham, is situated in a housing estate and because our premises are used for community events, church members have become involved through giving support to such efforts. I belong to an 'Over 30's Group'. Yes, it was going to be an 'Over 50s Group' but we reasoned that we really needed some younger ones to run such a group! So we have met some just over 30s with families, and barriers are being broken down, as we chat while doing painting or craft together. We can see depression and loneliness being dispelled, as a sense of belonging and self esteem is restored, and we have the chance to talk about how faith helps, in a very informal setting.



Beryl leads the Toddler Group at Hivings Park Free Church, Chesham

I am privileged to run a Parent and Toddler Group at the church, and would urge older folk, who have no children still at home, to offer their help with serving refreshments and being a 'listening ear' at times when leaders like myself are occupied with practicalities, such as singsongs or playing ball with a child whose mother is so tired after a sleepless night with a new baby. This role can be so rewarding and lead to wider aspects of your prayer ministry. The use of rotas can mean that you can be flexible if other needs have to be considered. Your church may record their worship service and the delivery and weekly collection of a recorded tape can mean a visit with a purpose.

Even this week, an older lady attended with her 18 month old grandchild for the first time – the reason being 'for him to make friends' but already we have struck up a rapport with 'grandma' and find we have mutual friends in this locality. Any adult shyness vanishes when attention is focussed on the children and their happiness. I think this lady will in due time be introduced to other aspects of our church's weekly programme!

Well, I trust this will prove helpful and be used by the Holy Spirit to bring more folk into the Kingdom."

DIARY DATES

14 July 2006. Regional Day Conference, 'Never Too Late' at Wilson Carlile College, 50 Cavendish Street, Sheffield S3 7RZ. Speakers include: Gaynor Hammond, 'Sacred Moments in the Land of Forgetfulness'; Mike Collyer, 'The New Aged Church'; Michael Reeder, Christ Church Fulwood, 'Friday Club' – What a Church Can Do for Older People.

12 September 2006. Regional Day Conference, 'Hope for the Future' at Bowthorpe Worship Centre, Bowthorpe Hall Road, Norwich NR5 9NS. Speaker: Rt Rev Gavin Read.

21 October 2006. Churches Together in Portsmouth,

'Bridging the Gap'. A Day's Conference to encourage local churches to participate in a Year of Mission to Older People in 2007. Speakers: Julie Anderson, Prayer for the Nations, Rev Paul Harris, formerly Head of Evangelism Department at Evangelical Alliance.

This is your chance to come and meet others engaged in outreach to people in later life.

For further details of venue and speakers see our website: www.outlook-trust.org.uk or write to us at: Outlook, The Wycliffe Centre, Horsleys Green, High Wycombe, Bucks HP14 3XL

How to join us

<p>Group Affiliation</p> <p>Provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies of the bi-annual Outlook Newsletter. Access to available resources. Links to other individuals and groups working with older people Assistance with projects to develop your ministry to older people. Access to customised seminars and training workshops. Share ideas, develop mission and outreach in the community <p>Cost: £50 per annum</p>	<p>Individual Membership</p> <p>For those who recognize the spiritual needs of older people and share our vision to help them understand the Christian Faith.</p> <p>We offer encouragement, support and training.</p> <p>To receive regular mailings, complete the slip overleaf.</p> <p>Finances</p> <p>We do not require an annual membership fee, but support in this way is vital if we are to develop our vision.</p>	<p>Advantages of Membership</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fellowship with others who share the same calling. Prayer backing and encouragement for your own projects in evangelism. Access to OUTLOOK'S resource material. Opportunity to join OUTLOOK teaching and witness teams. Preference for places at OUTLOOK conferences, training events and other activities.
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Realizing Opportunities

Gwen Adkins: Chancery Court, February 2006

Seven of us who are residents in these retirement flats all attend the same church – St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Dartford – and we meet as a home group once a fortnight, and now two other elderly people from church are attached to our group. We befriend others in the flats. Together we held a 'Favourite Hymns' time in the summer, and a Carol Service at Christmas time. We invited the other residents of the flats to the events, and also other members of our church. We had wonderful support from the church, both practical and prayerful.

Marnie and Albert Simmans: St Albans, February 2006

If only we churchgoers would go round more churches we would then realise how rich each is in its own way. In your November letter what you wrote concerning Christmas certainly rang bells with us. I get to dread Christmas because of the way it begins in October and then the manic activity, (i.e. Christmas Tree Festival – ours raised £7,000) etc., etc. I must sound like a real Scrooge. This year was so different because Albert and I joined with the Salvation Army who allowed us to accompany their Band to the hospital and distribute presents, plus love of course. I met a lady, Pat, who had been in the hospital one year; she cried when I took the small gift and stroked her hair. We have a fear of hospitals and going round helped dispel that; in the afternoon we had two single friends round for tea and somehow, the meaning of Christmas was unwrapped more than when we have had family, none of whom, sadly, are believers.

Outlook Contacts in the Regions

For more information about Outlook locally speak to one of our members closest to you.

Scotland

Glasgow: John Leitch 01236 721475

Wales

Bargoed: Rosemary Bookless 01443 832166

Milford Haven: Sheila Jones 01646 695997

North East

Corbridge: Brian & Barbara Jessup

01434 633081

Malton: John & Jenny Boxwell 01653 699427

North West

Carlisle: Gordon & Betty Rudman

01228 529521

Blackpool: Sheila Burrows 01253 356974

Greater Manchester: Ada Smith 01457 764080

Spital, Wirral: Joyce Sefton 0151 3344294

East Midlands

Derby: Michael & Joy Smith 01332 552051

Lincolnshire: Cynthia Bunch 01673 844661

Loughborough: David Grainger 01509 263153

West Midlands

Castle Bromwich: Brenda Charles

0121 748 5574

Meriden: Ellen Watkins 01676 522534

Leamington Spa: Richard Zair 01926 317096

Walsall: Pat Sutton 01922 419933

Sandwell: Audrey Bedford 0121 4226254

Newcastle under Lyme: Rev A F Creber

01782 616397

Shrewsbury: Anne Roberts 01743 872724

Tewkesbury: Charles & Jean Tume

01684 773635

East Anglia

Chelmsford: Rosemary Beenham

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Essex: Suzy Edmundson 01245 224181

Norwich: Edna Hadlett 01603 454936

Central & Southern

Bognor Regis: Ray & Phyl France

01243 823703

Worthing: Howard Schnaar 01903 202433

Swanage: Stan & Nancy Hornsby

01929 424087

Emsworth: Grace Jacobs 01243 373248

South East

Bromley: Juanita Kirby 020 8857 5412

Eastbourne: Buddy Reeve 01323 642471

East Grinstead: June Crome 01342 326842

Redhill: Anne Jeater 01737 763695

Sutton: Les Wileman 020 8647 4527

Thanet: Chris Truslove 01843 865346

South West

Weston super Mare: Elizabeth Williams

01934 624101

Gloucester: Cindy Proctor 01452 731852

Ways of Giving to Outlook

- Gift Aid:** For tax payers. Please ask for a Gift Aid Declaration Form.
- Direct Gift:** Cheques should be made payable to Outlook and sent to the address below.
- Banker's Order:** For regular giving. Please ask for a Banker's Order Form.
- Internet Payments at:** www.givenow.org and search for Outlook Trust.
- Legacy:** By remembering Outlook in your Will. Please ask for details.
- Charitable Accounts:** such as Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) or Stewardship Services.

OUTLOOK, The Wycliffe Centre, Horsleys Green, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP14 3XL

I/we are pleased to apply for (tick as appropriate):

- Individual Membership
- Group Affiliation
- Please send me:**
- Further copies of this Newsletter to share with others (Please state how many)
- Some 'flyers' to introduce OUTLOOK to others (Please state how many)
- Some more information about OUTLOOK

I enclose a gift for the ministry of Outlook

£

Please sign if you wish tax to be claimed on this gift: **Signed** _____

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