



# PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



WEEKLY PRESBYTERY LETTER - JANUARY 27, 2015

Amy Hanson, Ph.D.

## MINISTRY WITH THE NEW OLD

### Question?

What does NPR Radio, USA Today, Chico's clothing store, CVS pharmacy, Whole Foods market, CNN and the Obama administration all have in common?

### Answer?

They are all investing significant amounts of time, money and research into one of the biggest demographic shifts ever to have occurred in America – the aging population. Specifically, these entities, as well as hundreds of others, are studying the baby boomer and the impact that this huge group will have on society.

The baby boom generation (whom I like to refer to as 'the new old') includes 78 million people born between 1946-1964. [Pew Research Center](#)<sup>1</sup> reports that 10,000 adults are turning 65 each day and that in 20 years, almost 20% of our population will be over the age of 65.

If we want to be churches that are culturally relevant; if we want to respond to the changes occurring in our nation and be like the "men of Issachar who understood the times" (1 Chronicles 12:32), we must begin to make this a priority. In fact, I believe it should be one of the major, strategic initiatives within our churches.

A good starting point is to consider these four important characteristics of the new old.

**1. The new old are approaching aging in a much different way than preceding generations.** For starters, leading-edge baby boomers and those just slightly older, do not like the word senior and they reject just about anything that smacks of old age.

I've had more than one frustrated church leader tell me, "We can't get those sixty-year olds to attend our senior adult activities!" One primary reason for this is because the new old, do not consider themselves to be seniors and for the most part, they are never going to fold into the existing senior adult ministry at a church. They are not interested in potluck luncheons or bus trips. While some of these ministry ideas have worked in the past, they are not going to reach this new generation of older adults.

Community senior centers are discovering this and making adjustments like taking out the shuffleboard court and putting in fitness centers. Some retirement communities are even removing the names 'senior' and 'retirement' from their titles. The Church will need to follow suit.

A handful of churches across the country are creating boomer ministries (separate from their senior adult ministries) and are calling these new ministries Encore, Adult Impact or simply Boomer ministry. Whatever the format, we need different ministry names, fresh ideas and a whole new approach to how we do things.

**2. The new old are reinventing retirement.** [The New Retirement Survey](#) conducted by Merrill Lynch found that 76% of boomers want to keep working in some fashion during retirement. Many adults want to retire from their current career and launch into something new, like part-time work or a job that has flexibility. The type of jobs boomers are most interested in are working in the nonprofit sector, starting their own business, or just doing a fun job that is less stressful. One thing is certain. Boomers do not plan to sit in a rocking chair and simply relax for the next 20 years of their lives. They want their retirement years to include a component of work – either paid employment or a significant volunteer role.

**3. Not all older adults are Christians.** I know that sounds so simple, but think about this for a moment. Many churches invest a lot of time, staff and resources into children’s and youth ministry – which is important - but few churches are intentional and strategic about reaching the millions of older adults who do not have a relationship with Christ. Ironically, there are some characteristics among 50+ age adults that make them very receptive to the gospel. They are facing a number of life transitions such as caring for aging parents, concerns about their own health and mortality, financial worries, and evolving relationships with their adult children and grandchildren. All of these stresses provide great opportunities for communities of faith to reach out with ministry. Boomers are also receptive because they are searching for purpose. They are entering a new phase of life and are asking questions like, “now that I am getting older, my work life is changing and the children are out of the house, what is it that gives my life meaning?” Obviously, Christ-followers hold the only true answer to that question.

I’ve been thrilled to learn of a few church plants and multi-site venues that are purposing to reach out to this age group. But we need more.

**4. Aging boomers have the potential to make a tremendous Kingdom impact with their lives.** They have time, experience and resources and they want to participate in purposeful endeavors that will benefit others. As these adults enter their retirement years, they desire to do more than staple newsletters, fold bulletins and make coffee. One man said about his retirement: “I want to give my time to ministry through my church, but I’d like to do more than be an usher.” These are adults that can lead community efforts to help with homelessness, give hours each week to mentoring children at an underprivileged school, serve for an extended time overseas, counsel those who are facing unemployment and on and on the list goes. It is imperative that we open our eyes and recognize the potential of this generation and then find ways to unleash them into ministry. My fear is that if the Church does not engage them, they will look elsewhere.

Never before in history have so many adults moved into their later years of life with so much health and vitality. We have a window of opportunity right now to harness the capacity of this enormous generation. To grow them up as disciples of Christ and to mobilize them for His mission. Let’s not miss the chance.

<sup>1</sup> <http://pewsocialtrends.org/2010/12/20/baby-boomers-approach-65-glumly/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.retirement-jobs-online.com/retirement-survey.html>

*-Amy Hanson, Ph.D. leads a speaking, writing and consulting ministry that equips the church for ministry with the new old. She is the author of the book, *Baby Boomers and Beyond: Tapping the Ministry Talents and Passions of Adults over 50* and she regularly teaches gerontology courses to college students. Amy lives with her family in Council Bluffs, IA. You can read more about her ministry and follow her blog at [www.amyhanson.org](http://www.amyhanson.org)*

**COMING TO PEACE RIVER IN FEBRUARY ...**

## NEWS ARTICLES

The following articles may interest you. Click on the underlined phrases.

[Christianity cannot survive the decline in worship](#)

On Faith: Church leaders who are serious about saving the faith need to be serious about worship.

[First female Church of England bishop consecrated in York](#)

The (London) Guardian: The Rt. Rev. Libby Lane has been made the bishop of Stockport with solemn oaths and high ceremony.

[A police chief turned pastor, working to heal the nation's racial rifts](#)

The New York Times: Police chief turned pastor is proverbial prophet without honor in his own land, calling for less adversarial and confrontational form of policing.

[Auschwitz liberation ceremony will be the last for many survivors present](#)

The (London) Guardian: European leaders and royalty gather for 70th anniversary amid unprecedented security and rise in anti-semitism.

BBC: [Auschwitz anniversary: The survivor who brought the Holocaust to life](#)

[How Jesus became God](#)

Commonweal: Luke Timothy Johnson reviews Bart D. Ehrman's new book, "The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee."

[You'll never guess which U.S. cities are most 'Bible-minded'](#)

Religion News Service: A new study by the American Bible Society shows which cities are most "Bible-minded" in 2015.

[Dave Odom: How to get things done while disagreeing with your boss](#)

Daniel Patrick Moynihan's work in the Nixon administration illustrates how to exert influence and accomplish an agenda within constraints. [Read more »Q&A: Future of Denominations](#)



[Julia Groom: Buildings for a new tomorrow](#)

At a time when the Episcopal Church and other denominations are closing churches, the Episcopal Church Building Fund has expanded its mission to help distressed congregations think in new ways about their buildings and the future of the church, says the fund president. [Read more »Reflection:](#)

***Christian Leadership***



[Richard J. Mouw: Leadership and bearing pain](#)

All leaders will unavoidably cause pain in the lives of others. But they do not inflict pain without also bearing pain, says the former president of Fuller Theological Seminary. [Read more »](#)

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

February 7<sup>th</sup>:

All are invited to First, Sarasota on Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup> for their Faith Focus Weekend, with Guest Speaker, Dr. Cynthia Rigby, Professor of Theology at Austin Seminary. See attached flyer for details.

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February 26 & 27:

As we face a drop in church membership and the next generation of retirees moving to Florida and NOT automatically coming to church, as has been the habit of past generations, breathe, don't panic, but do something. Keep your calendar marked for the presentation of [Amy Hanson](#), Baby-Boomer and Beyond ([click here for more info](#)) on February 26, and the regional workshops on Friday, February 27.

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February 28 & March 1:

When we wonder what is God up to in the world, is the global church in trouble?... breathe...God is at work as God has been for a long time. Mark your calendars for a Saturday morning, February 28<sup>th</sup>, presentation by Hunter Ferrell, Director of Global Missions for the PCUSA ([click here for video](#)). Flyer attached.

**STATED MEETING OF PRESBYTERY**

Thursday, February 26, 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.  
Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, Sarasota

**MISION PENIEL**

*A Ministry of Peace River Presbytery to the Farmworkers in Immokalee*

The Mision Peniel Task Force continues to meet and build the support and structure for continuing this vital ministry. If you want to make a donation to support this recovery effort you may send the check (marked Mision Peniel) to Peace River Presbytery | 5600 Peace River Rd. | North Port, FL. 34287.

- Volunteer Position Opening: Publications Coordinator ([click for information](#))
- Meal Serving Schedule ([click for information](#))
- Collection Centers for Mision Peniel Supplies ([click for information](#))
- Critical Needs List ([click for information](#))

**BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.**

*A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma*

[Fall 2014 Newsletter](#)

***A Thank You Note:***

I would like to THANK Peace River Presbytery for your thoughtful prayers, emails, text messages, phone calls and cards, following the loss of my son Christopher.

I could not have gotten through this without God's help, my family and my friends.

Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Alesia Sharpe

If you would like to make donations to the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the address is:

Muscular Dystrophy Association  
In Memory of Christopher McGinnis  
6315 Presidential Court, Suite 140  
Fort Myers, FL 33919

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**PRAYER NEEDS:**

**Please continue to pray for:**

- Alesia Sharpe, PRP Office Manager, in the passing of her 25-year old son, Christopher, on January 14 from complications related to Muscular Dystrophy. (*Thank you note from Alesia above*).
- Sung and Hope Lee, in the passing of Sung's close uncle, Rev. Dr. Syngman Rhee, Moderator of the 212<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.
- Dr. Stephen A. Hayner, President of Columbia Seminary – in Hospice in the last stages of cancer.
- Rev. Paul Chaney (retired) – declining health. Has been at Westminster Towers, Bradenton for the past three years with Alzheimer's and Dementia, and developed pneumonia around Thanksgiving. He has been in bed since, on oxygen, IV's and medication.
- Pat Woody and family, in the loss of Rev. Dr. Ray Woody, Pastor Emeritus of Siesta Key Chapel.
- Anita Adkison, mother of Rev. Dr. Stephen Adkison, Pastor of Chapel By The Sea – recovery from breast cancer surgery and treatment to follow. Lives in Arkansas.
- Rev. Susan Rice, Associate Pastor of Faith, Cape Coral – recovery from breast cancer treatment.

- Greg Beckwith (son of Jim and Becky Beckwith) – kidney failure – is undergoing dialysis and is on a kidney transplant list. Greg is also diabetic and underwent quadruple bypass heart surgery in June 2013.
- Glenn Beisser (father of Rev. Devon Beisser Ducheneau, Stated Supply Pastor for Wintergarden P.C.) – lung cancer and heart issues
- Hmingi Browne’s (A.P. of Church of the Palms) sister, Nutei – long recovery continues after being hit by a bus. Lives in Myanmar.
- Donna Blaser (wife of Wayne Blaser) – Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma
- Grandson of Tim and Martha Halverson - suffering from a rare autoimmune disease.
- Beth-El Farmworker Ministry
- Misión Peniel
- Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center
- Dan and Elizabeth Turk, PCUSA Mission Co-Workers in Madagascar
- Les and Cindy Morgan, PCUSA Mission Co-Workers in Bangladesh
- Pastors and Educators in transition
- Nations in crisis

**CHURCH PRAYER GUIDE: FEBRUARY 2015:**

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| February 1  | <u>Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, Sarasota</u><br>Co-Pastor: Rev. Dr. Bruce Wismer<br>email: <a href="mailto:pastors@pineshorespres.org">pastors@pineshorespres.org</a><br>Co-Pastor: Rev. Karen Wismer<br>email: <a href="mailto:karen@pineshorespres.org">karen@pineshorespres.org</a> |
| February 8  | <u>Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, Sarasota</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Michael Mansberg<br>email: <a href="mailto:covenant.presbyterian@comcast.net">covenant.presbyterian@comcast.net</a>                                                                                                   |
| February 15 | <u>Siesta Key Chapel, Sarasota</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dr. Kathi Wiggins<br>email: <a href="mailto:pastork@comcast.net">pastork@comcast.net</a>                                                                                                                                                |
| February 22 | <u>Whitfield Estates Presbyterian Church, Sarasota</u><br>Temporary Supply Pastor: Rev. Jane Jones-Norris<br>email: <a href="mailto:jjn7416@gmail.com">jjn7416@gmail.com</a>                                                                                                               |

**PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: JANUARY 2015**

You may view the entire calendar on the Presbytery web site: [www.peacriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org)

**January 29**

Pastoral Care Group

**February 2**

Planning Team (12:00 – 2:00 p.m.)