



REACHING PRIME TIMERS FOR JESUS

Statistics suggest that 80 percent of people are reached for Christ by their 12th birthday. Those same statisticians show another 10 percent are reached before their 20th birthday. That leaves the remaining 10 percent to be scattered over the rest of a person's life. The older one becomes the less chance he or she has of becoming a believer. Some of the factors include:

- habits one forms,
- little or no interest in church before age 55,
- health problems preventing church attendance, and
- God has not been a factor in their life before. Conclusion, He won't be now.

Just who are these prime timers? "Some older adults are wonderfully sweet and flexible; others have become sour and brittle. Some have a great vision for tomorrow; others refuse to live for today and retreat into the past. Some enjoy robust health and vitality; others suffer many physical infirmities. Some are materially wealthy; others are pathetically poor. Some are spiritually enriched with a vital faith; others are devoid of any hope for eternity. Older adults are as different and changing as the reflection in a kaleidoscope."*

- *Why evangelize older adults?* Jesus commanded us to make disciples of all people and that includes the prime timer. Every seven seconds someone turns 50! Many have practiced religion, but have never experienced God. Add them to those who have never had an interest in church or God and the numbers and needs soar!
- *Are older adults really open to the gospel?* Many mature adults are experiencing life changes. Those in their 50s and 60s are beginning to care for aging parents, launching adult children into the stream of life, experiencing grandchildren, preparing for retirement, and some even job seeking. Those in their 70s and older are dealing with the loss of friends, spouse, job, health, and independence. During these life changes, persons are more open and receptive to the gospel message.
- *How do we connect the unconnected to Christ?* We must define who we are attempting to reach and target their needs. To become intentional in their outreach to prime timers, churches must:
 - Build relationships with the unchurched of the community.
 - Organize outreach events.
 - Create a climate of evangelism.
 - Move from an introductory stage to discipling the newly converted.
 - Become available in times of crisis.
- How is your church doing? Don't let those amazing grays go somewhere else to find the answers to life's questions. Determine now to help them find that Jesus is the answer and He is in your church!

*Win and Charles Arn, *Catch the Age Wave* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1999), 28.