



## NEWS RELEASE

Embargoed until 10 October 2017 3:30pm

### NEW PARTNERSHIP AIMS TO EQUIP AND RESOURCE THE CHURCH TO RELEASE THE POTENTIAL OF THE AGEING POPULATION

A new initiative between five leading Christian charities was launched today focusing on the profound societal consequences of the ageing UK population. Faith in Later Life seeks to present the challenge in a way that will inform, equip, encourage and inspire individual Christians and churches to lead the change needed so that older people in every community in the UK can live fulfilled, productive and dignified lives.

As a partnership between Pilgrims' Friend Society, The Salvation Army, London City Mission, Mission Care, and Keychange Charity, the campaign identifies that far too often an ageing population is portrayed in terms of being an 'issue' and 'problem'. But the attitude towards older people described in the Bible is very different and a very real challenge to 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians in the UK.

Lord Mackay of Clashfern, who hosted the launch said, *"The Bible describes older people as having a vital role to play in the church and in society and we are blessed that advances in medicine mean that there will be a significant increase in their numbers. Many of these will be Christians who will be seeking to know how they can continue to work out their faith in later life. Many are living increasingly lonely and isolated lives and they need to hear the good news of the gospel. These are significant opportunities and challenges and I am delighted that "Faith in Later Life" has been launched to help churches and Christian people respond."*

**Faith in Later Life** has commissioned a study by London Seminary into the theology of old age and built a library of information and resources relative to later life which will be accessible via a new website. In addition, the website brings together different evangelism resources for use with older people and provides links and ideas on how best to engage those who are in later life.

Alan Hare, Project Manager for Faith in Later Life commented, *"If Jesus were alive today to survey the harvest field for his Church he would have noticed many older people. Faith in Later Life seeks to inspire and equip Christians living with and working with older people as other organisations have been doing over many years for Christian youth work. Anyone involved in working with older people should visit the Faith in Later Life website, sign up for our newsfeeds and use the form on the website to tell us about the work that they are doing. We are committed to acting on the feedback received"*

For more information and access to the library of resources go to [www.faithinlaterlife.org](http://www.faithinlaterlife.org).

**ENDS**

## **Editors notes:**

### **Endorsements**

Pippa Cramer, who runs a project endorsed by Archbishop Justin Welby commented:-  
*"It has been a privilege for me to see Connections reaching out from our local church and giving hundreds of seniors the opportunity to be known, make friends and experience the difference Jesus can make to their lives. I am delighted that the video introducing our work is featured on Faith in Later Life and I wish we had had access to the Faith in Later Life website when we were starting out!"*

Dr Jennifer Bute, the founder of Gloriousopportunity.org, commented "*I have come to see my diagnosis of dementia as an opportunity to challenge the church, and others, to understand dementia better and to see the positive contribution that people living with dementia can make if only we were seen as God sees us. I am delighted that Faith in Later Life will also make all that I have learned more available to people who need to know.*"

Helen Wordsworth, Founder and Director of Parish Nursing Ministries UK, said "*Parish Nursing Ministries UK knows the impact that Churches can have through our model of caring for people of all ages. We are excited about the potential of Faith in Later Life to increase the visibility of what Christian charities like ours can do with older people in partnership with local churches.*"

Roger Hitchings, Pastor and Conference Speaker, added "*There is a great need for information that is based on solid Bible teaching and is proven in practice. I applaud Faith in Later Life for being prepared to commission work of this kind where there are gaps, and to make what already exists more accessible.*"

Jeremy Sharpe, National Coordinator, Linking Lives, commented "*We are approached by many churches excited to hear about our work, some of whom have struggled to find us. "Faith in Later Life" will play a vital role in helping churches to connect with charities like ours that have developed a model of social action which could be a real asset to their ministry.*"

Adrian Reynolds, Training Director, Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, said "*Starting, growing and resourcing work amongst seniors is a pressing need for the church in the UK. This focused initiative is an essential tool in our desire to see faith flourish amongst a much-neglected segment of our population.*"

Geoff Weekes, Chairman of Trustees, Bridge Care, commented "*Through my work in Bath I have been involved in mobilising churches to do more for and with older people. I am pleased to support the vision of Faith in Later Life to enable more of this on a national scale.*"

## **Editors notes:**

Faith in Later Life is an initiative of five leading evangelical Christian charities:

- Keychange
- London City Mission
- Mission Care

- Pilgrims' Friend Society
- The Salvation Army

For more information contact:

	<b>Media contact</b>	<b>Thumbnail Description</b>
Faith in Later Life Project Director	Alan Hare <a href="mailto:alan.hare@faithinlaterlife.com">alan.hare@faithinlaterlife.com</a> T 020 3856 9070; Mob 07730 064301	Recently retired, Alan works for a number of Christian charities involved with working with older people, prisoners and City Missions. He has led the Faith in Later Life project since January 2017.
Keychange Chief Executive	Phil Martin <a href="mailto:philm@keychange.org.uk">philm@keychange.org.uk</a> T 0207 633 0533	Keychange is a Christian charity, creating caring communities. We provide twelve care and support communities for older people and homeless young people. We seek to create caring communities based on our Christian values, ethos, mission and strategy.
London City Mission  Field Director of Ministries	Terry Puttick <a href="mailto:terry.puttick@lcm.org.uk">terry.puttick@lcm.org.uk</a> T 020 7234 3588	London has many needs....at London City Mission we believe that, most importantly, <b>London needs Jesus</b> . That's why we got started in the beginning, and it remains our firm conviction today.
Mission Care Chief Executive	David Evans <a href="mailto:David.Evans@missioncare.org.uk">David.Evans@missioncare.org.uk</a> T 020 8289 7937	Mission Care has provided care for vulnerable adults since 1904. Our main area of work is providing person centred care in our homes in Bromley and London.
Pilgrims' Friend Society (PFS) Chief Executive	Stephen Hammersley <a href="mailto:Stephen.hammersley@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk">Stephen.hammersley@pilgrimsfriend.org.uk</a> T 0300 300 1401 M: 07717 221 653 <a href="http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk">www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk</a>	PFS provides fulfilled living for older people through our residential care schemes and churches equipped by our conferences and resources.
The Salvation Army Director Older People's Services	Elaine Cobb <a href="mailto:Elaine.Cobb@salvationarmy.org.uk">Elaine.Cobb@salvationarmy.org.uk</a> T 020 7367 4878 Mob 07726 995437	Called to be disciples of Jesus Christ, The Salvation Army United Kingdom Territory with the Republic of Ireland exists to save souls, grow saints and serve suffering humanity

## **Editors notes:**

### **Key Statistics**

The Bible celebrates older people as deserving honour and having a vital role to work with following generations and the good news is that:

- One in three children born today are expected to reach 100
- The number of people aged over 90 has almost tripled in the last thirty years or so to just under 1m
- By 2035 almost 1 in 2 adults will be aged over 65

The Bible describes people in relationship with God and each other but:

- 1.2 million older people in England are chronically lonely and have been coping with loneliness for years (Age UK)
- Nearly half a million people over the age of 60 usually spend every day alone (Age UK)
- A further half a million usually go at least five or six days a week without seeing or speaking to anyone at all (Age UK)
- More than a third (39%) of people with dementia said they felt lonely (Alzheimer's Society)

Many church leaders and Christians struggle to talk about their theology in terms that make sense to people who lack mental capacity and their families yet:

- There are an estimated 850,000 people with dementia in the UK (Alzheimer's UK)
- And although the incidence of dementia is dropping, numbers could rise to over 1 million by 2025 and 2 million by 2051.
- Most people in the UK know someone whose capacity to “decide for Christ” and to “remember their creator” is impaired by dementia.