

The MASTER's Group includes special features and commentary to assist with understanding the life issues and challenges of aging successfully and the opportunities available for personal enrichment and Christian service.

Meet David Gallagher

Dr. Dave Gallagher is nationally known as an author, speaker and pastor. He is also on staff at Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, Wisconsin. A widely respected authority, Dave has written extensively in the field of pastoral ministry, outreach, small groups, loss and grief, and middle, senior, and elderly adult ministry.

Recent books include *Healing Takes Time* (Liturgical Press); and *Senior Adult Ministry in the 21st Century* (Wipf & Stock Publishers; originally by Group Publishing). Dr. Gallagher leads seminars around the nation on strengthening adult ministry in the Church. He and his wife, Mary Ann, reside in Surprise, Arizona, and have two adult children and two granddaughters.

Christmas Caroling and Hamburger Cookies!
by Dr. Dave Gallagher

Don't think those in the 70+ crowd cannot or will not go Christmas Caroling. Put a new twist in this old tradition. Here is a unique idea that will add fun to this wonderful ministry of bringing Christmas cheer. Forget the old Christmas cookies and fudge – Make something unique: Your 70+ group and their friends will have fun and laughter as they make . . .

Christmas hamburger cookies!

You read that right – hamburger cookies. They are delicious and simple to make. Participants will laugh together as they serve together.

- Have boxes of vanilla wafers, lots of sesame seeds, and a good supply of mint cookies as well as plenty of coconut, vanilla frosting and honey.
- For each Christmas hamburger cookie, spread ½ teaspoon of vanilla frosting on the flat side of the vanilla wafers.
- Place 1 teaspoon of coconut and a mint cookie on the frosting. Spread the flat side of the second vanilla wafer with ½ teaspoon frosting; place the wafer frosting side down on the mint cookies.
- Brush the tops of the “Christmas hamburgers” with honey; sprinkle with sesame seed. Tip to put “lettuce” on the hamburger:
- Tint coconut by placing coconut and 1-2 drops of green food color in a jar or a heavy re-sealable plastic bag. Screw on the lid or seal the bag and shake it until the coconut is uniformly colored.

- When the cookies are made, place six or eight on a plate along with a Scripture tract or Bible verse to encourage recipients.

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Select a time. Caroling does not need to be at night.

- If you are going to a skilled nursing care center or assisted living center, morning is the best time. Even when you go to those living at home, mornings is the best time to visit the elderly.
- Provide Transportation: If you have a handicapped accessible bus or van that's the way to go. If not you may want to rent one or car pool.
- Be sure your schedule and route are well planned and a map is provided for all drivers.

Have a very Merry Christmas!

*From: Senior Adult Ministry in the 21st Century, David P. Gallagher, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002, Eugene, OR,. Offers fifty practical ways to involve *The MASTER's Group* in ministry, eight outreach ideas and twenty-three hints for effective outreach. Order this book from our CASA online store.*

Sharing Christ at Christmas

The great commission calls us to share God's love. Pastor Tom Mercer, the Senior Pastor of Victorville, California's High Desert Church, has learned the power of training people to share their faith through the *oikos* phenomenon. *Oikos*, the Greek word for "extended family," encompasses our relational world which involves anywhere from eight to fifteen people. God supernaturally and strategically places people in our spheres of influence.

After twenty-five years leading this church from 150 to over 8,000 regular participants, Pastor Tom has learned how to help people share their faith. The following article written by Pastor Tom encourages those in The MASTER's Group to share their faith, particularly during this Christmas season. Pastor Mercer submitted the following article to encourage those in the 70+ group to share Christ at Christmas.

Oikos – Your World, Delivered

By Dr. Tom Mercer

Members and friends in the 70+ group of our church often ask me how we may reach out to younger people. As every generation of believers, today's older adults, carry an innate sense of responsibility to pass the torch of ministry on to successive generations. The problem is, worship style wars have become the number one priority in many congregations and that's a terrible distraction.

I believe that young people stay away from church for the same reason most older people do; not because the music is unfamiliar but primarily because there is no compelling reason to attend in the first place. People need a better reason to attend church than simply because it is the right thing to do! Churches need to come up with better reasons to invite the younger generation than simply because they want to avoid closing the churches doors. That is a terrible excuse for having a church – just to see if we can make it survive!

Jesus commissioned us to reach the lost; and He both modeled and taught a strategy that would facilitate that endeavor. Throughout the New Testament, when God's Spirit changed a life, a "world changer" was born. Whether it was a demon possessed man, a swindler named Zacchaeus, a royal official with a dying son, a tax collector named Matthew, a Centurion named Cornelius, a business woman named Lydia or a Philippian jailor; they all were sent back home to their *oikos*, their household.

Oikos, the Greek word for "extended family," encompasses our relational worlds – anywhere from eight to fifteen people, on the average, whom God has supernaturally

and strategically placed in our spheres of influence. If those relationships frame our evangelistic targets, then that reality must frame our ministry strategies for every generation. Our mission is to prepare people to go back “home” and become world changers.

When believers of any and every generation come to understand that specific evangelistic assignment, *oikos* becomes the great equalizer in any church. It doesn't matter how good looking a person is or how unattractive one might be. It doesn't matter how tall you are or how short you are. It doesn't matter if you have money or if you're flat broke. Your ethnic background doesn't matter, or your theological background or age.

Young and old, as believers we all have the same command from our Lord – to go and make disciples. We all have eight to fifteen people whom God has supernaturally and strategically placed in our relational world. As we grow, it seems that we have more members of our *oikos* world who have “MD” at the end of their name, but the command from our Lord is the same, to share the gospel. This is the greatest job in the history of the human race – to communicate the amazing grace of God, the only component in the universe powerful enough to affect the kind of change everyone's world needs.

During this special season of the year, there are unlimited opportunities before us to share Christ's love. This Christmas season discover the simplicity of world change, 8-15 people at a time.

For more information on how to change your relational world for Christ, go to <http://www.oikosbook.com/> and order the book, *Oikos Your World, Delivered*.