

## Ministering to Our Senior Citizens (UCB Word for the Day, 4.10.11)

...They shall be fresh and flourishing. Psalm 92:14

There will soon be millions of people alive who have reached the age of 100, and you need to know how to relate to them. It's a mistake to look at retired people in the light of what they have been, rather than what they can be. Too often they feel shelved. David said, 'Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone' (Psalm 71:9 NIV). It's crazy to think people can no longer learn; learning ability doesn't wear out. The rate of learning may decline, but the capacity remains constant. Let's encourage our golden oldies to exercise their minds, and to keep dreaming. Like an atrophied muscle, the ability to learn and grow tends to weaken only because it's not being used. Do you want to be 'filed away' when you're old? No? Well, neither do they. Instead, let's talk about coping with retirement; finding new ways to be useful; adjusting to a reduced income; learning to live alone; relating to grandchildren; understanding the aging process; maintaining high morale; keeping up personal appearance; and preparing for death. Rather than shunting off our wisest minds or belittling their contribution, we should help them to make demands on the church. In a very real sense, their opportunity to have a voice and a role in the church's ministry has been earned. Our culture shames itself by catering to teenagers who have less knowledge of what the church ought to be doing, while bypassing people in whom the Spirit of God has been working for 50 years or more.