



As the first wave of baby boomers celebrates the big 6–0, North America’s biggest generation is being bombarded with advice about how to spend the rest of their lives, and the significant pension funds they have accumulated. Rich in vocational skills, experience, and financial resources, today’s retirement-age adults (and those following immediately after them) are a ready and able resource for churches and communities. And most are looking for opportunities to make a difference. As the servant-hearted individuals highlighted in this story have discovered, there’s considerable joy to be found in life’s

SECOND

CALLINGS

ADULTS OVER 50 FIND FULFILLMENT IN NEW AVENUES OF SERVICE. by PEGGY MUMPER





At the midpoint

Most weekends Doug Sider, 55, is out sharing his “Observations at Halftime” program at churches and conferences,

encouraging those over 50 to keep dreaming, keep planning, and keep contributing “to culture, to society, and to the cause of Christ.” An active member of Westheights BIC Church, Kitchener, Ontario, Sider sees 50 as simply a midpoint and a fine time to move into a brand-new career with new challenges and goals. After 29 years of pastoring, Sider and his wife, Charlotte, left Calgary five years ago for southeastern Canada to be closer to family. At the same time, Sider entered a field that had fascinated him for years: real estate sales.

“I didn’t leave the pastorate,” Sider says. “I’ve simply taken my ministry to the business world. I was a pastor, now I’m a missionary.” In a few short years Sider went from a trainee selling homes to his current position as provincial sales manager for Reid’s Heritage Homes.



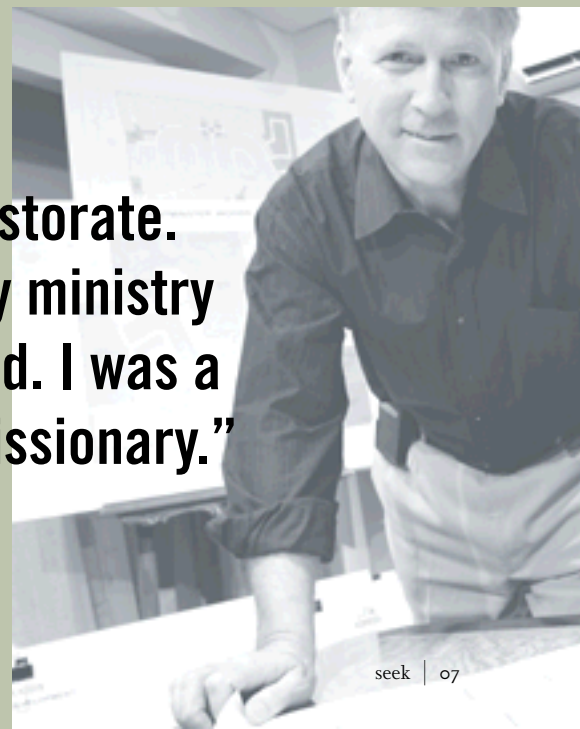
With his weekend speaking duties, Sider feels he’s achieved a “wonderful combination. I’m able to take Christ into the marketplace Monday through Friday and then encourage believers on the weekends.”

Sider admires a colleague who is still a successful working businessman at age 92. He has every intention of following in his mentor’s footsteps. “I like to believe that at age 55, we’ve got a little bit of wisdom but we are still youthful and vigorous, which gives us tremendous opportunity.”

While Sider coaches realtors, his wife, Charlotte, serves as the executive director of Children’s Home International. With these two vibrant callings, Sider says, “We are more excited than ever before and have more goals than ever before.” For Sider, these are not the years to consider retiring from life but “to renew our efforts and renew our commitments to serve Christ.”

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Doug Sider





Off the clock

Retired or employed, and regardless of the scale of the effort, Marion Yoder, 65,

a member of the Grantham (Pennsylvania) BIC Church, wants to continue to make a positive difference in people's lives. He spent 16 years with the state Department of Aging, researching and developing programs to assist the millions of elderly people in Pennsylvania. Now retired, Yoder enjoys being out from behind the desk and having time for volunteer activities.

Yoder says he relishes "not being on a clock every day. I can take the time to talk and get to know people. There's a part of life you miss out on if you always have to be aware of the clock and productivity."

Yoder volunteers in two very different arenas. He works with the development office and serves as treasurer of the auxiliary of Messiah Village, a retirement village sponsored by the BIC Church. "I think it's a wonderful place. But there's another group of people who aren't so privileged."

So Yoder volunteers with Capitol Area Computer Project, which puts

refurbished computers into the hands of those who might otherwise not afford one. He also works with the Grantham and Harrisburg BIC churches and Edison Village, a low-income housing project in Harrisburg, to provide computer training for residents. "We have quite a variety of people—some have serious disabilities, others just have problems with dexterity," Yoder reflects. "Their persistence and determination to learn these skills has just been amazing."

Yoder's work with Edison Village harks back to a calling he perceived during his college days in the 1960s. Moved by a desire to contribute to the battle against poverty, Yoder did volunteer work in Costa Rica—and

contemplated returning there after graduation—but a college professor urged him to consider ways to help the underprivileged at home. With his master's in agricultural economics, he came to Harrisburg to work in state government, where he fulfilled his calling by designing programs to assist the needy.

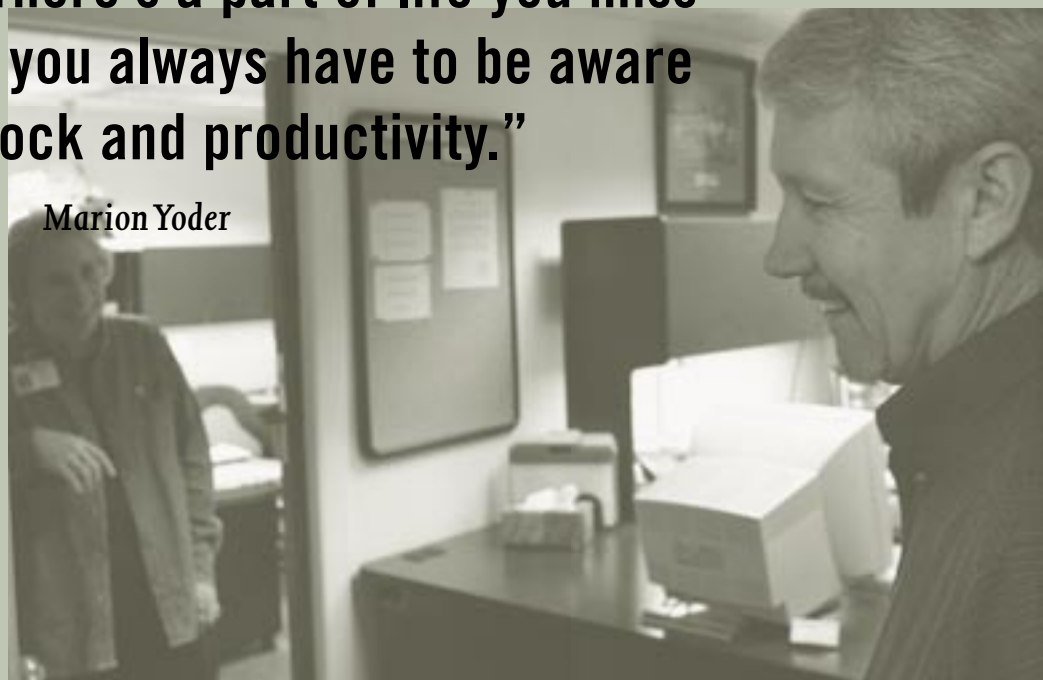
"I didn't think much about retirement when I was starting out. We feel that God has led us into areas where we're called to serve."

Yoder and Ellie, his wife of 37 years, are considering other volunteer options for the future. "My faith commitment has influenced me to take an interest in people no matter what their background, to make sure that every-

body has an equal chance at opportunities. I feel I can make a difference that way."

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Marion Yoder





Into the community

How long will 82-year-old Nina Schmucker keep working? “As long as the Lord wants

me to,” she says, laughing. Her enthusiasm helps run a clothing and household goods distribution center from her church, Mount Zion BIC, in Milltown, Ind.

Schmucker doesn’t see these golden years as a time to slow down and focus on herself. Those who do, she feels, are “losing out spiritually. Older people need to get out and help their church and be a testimony. We stay healthier if we’re up and working. Besides, it’s just a joy to help people.”

Schmucker knows about helping. She began teaching in a one-room school at age 19, with less than two years of training, because of the teacher shortage created by World War II. She taught kindergarten for 25 years, while raising five daughters and working with her late husband, Isaac, a pastor. They spent several years working on a Navajo reservation in New Mexico and then pastoring in Collingwood, Ontario, before returning to Nappanee, Ind., to consider their next move.

“God gave Isaac the vision. He saw the church. He saw the house and the farm where we would live.” In 1963, the family moved from Nappanee to



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start the church in Milltown. Friends from their hometown sent clothing for the girls. “There were so many

clothes we wondered, what are we going to do with all this?” They gave them away. More donations came, and the giveaway grew.

Now Schmucker and a number of volunteers from local churches sort donated clothes that fill a trailer. Once a month, the doors open for anyone to come and pick up the free items.

“We have the most wonderful time of fellowshiping together and sharing the Lord Jesus Christ. People are talking here and sharing together over there. We’re people people.”

Like Sider and Yoder, Schmucker says a retirement designed around travel and leisure is not for her. She prefers the exhilaration of working alongside others (she also does some sewing and teaches a Wednesday

night Bible study) to provide for the physical and spiritual needs of her church and community.

While allowing for time to enjoy family and grateful for the blessing of good health, these three don’t picture themselves slowing down anytime soon.



PEGGY MUMPER, a freelance writer and editor, lives in Harrisburg, Pa., and attends the Harrisburg BIC Church with her husband and five children.

➔ seeking more? To read more about Doug, Marion, and Nina, and for a Second Callings study guide, visit www.bic-church.org/seek.

PHOTOS OF DOUG SIDER BY TOMASZ ADAMSKI; PHOTOS OF NINA SCHMUCKER AND MARION YODER BY KEVIN BENEDICT.

