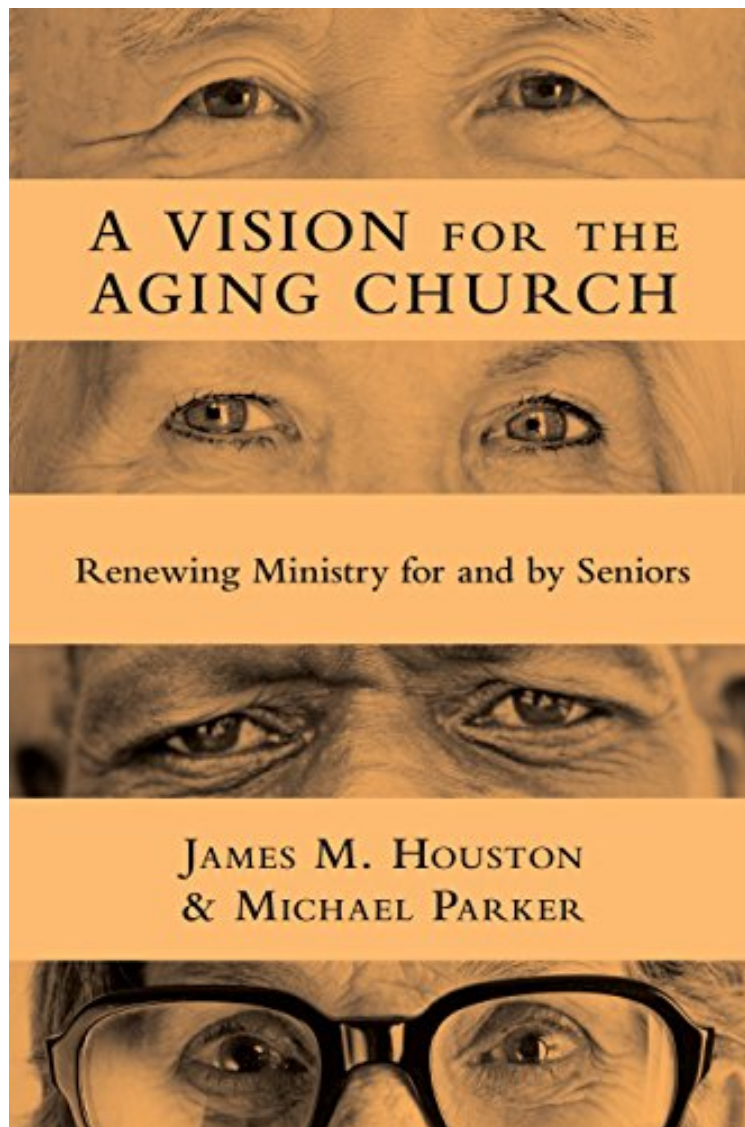


A Vision for the Aging Church: Renewing Ministry for and by Seniors

Von James M. Houston, Michael Parker
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Kurzbeschreibung Are we ready for the opportunities and challenges facing the aging church? Now is the time for the church to offer ministry to its increasing numbers of seniors and to benefit from ministry they can offer. In this book James M. Houston and Michael Parker issue an urgent call to reconceive the place and part of the elderly and seniors in the local church congregation. Confronting the idea that the aging are mostly a burden on the church, they boldly address the moral issues related to caring for them, provide examples of successful care-giving programs and challenge the church to restore broken connections across the generations. Cowritten by a noted theologian and an expert in the fields of social work and gerontology, this interdisciplinary book assesses our current cultural context and the challenges and opportunities we face. The authors show us that seniors aren't the problem. They are the solution.

Pressestimmen "This impressive book by Houston and Parker offers a thoughtful exploration of the important role and place of an increasing number of older persons in our faith communities. *A Vision for the Aging Church* provides an invaluable resource for both the church as well as the social work profession."--Rick Chamiec-Case, executive director, North American Association of Christians in Social Work "With the explosion of the older adult population, this insightful and powerful book encourages and motivates church leaders to take seriously the ministry to their seniors. It provides the needed resource to accomplish that goal. If you want to catch a vision for the aging church, and you want to learn how to respond to that vision, read this book!"--Dave Gallagher, author of *Senior Adult Ministry in the 21st Century and Healing Takes Time* "Railing against a culture that is often dismissive of the aged or that socializes the retired primarily toward ease and sometimes toward despair, Houston and Parker not only articulate a countercultural vision of aging, they demonstrate its potential vitality. Fresh insights emerge throughout as these authors set commonly referenced scriptural texts in the context of aging, offer insightful gerontological research to faith communities, and guide congregations and organizations in ministry both to and from older adults. Reading these pages one feels the acquired excellencies of soul that can emerge in the later stages of life when a person does not lose heart. How grateful we can be to James Houston and Michael Parker for giving us in this book a much-needed, contemporary, theological anthropology for eldership."--Chris Kiesling, Asbury Theological Seminary "An invaluable resource for today's church."--Regina Harrell, M.D., geriatrician and assistant professor, College of Community Health Sciences, University of Alabama "A source of inspiration and guidance for elders and their caregivers in the quest for successful aging. This work addresses a domain of living critical to many individuals that is generally ignored by the medical care system. Drs. Houston and Parker address the intergenerational issues of ministry for seniors as they navigate life and prepare for death."--George F. Fuller, M.D., director, VA Locum Tenens Program "James Houston and Michael Parker cast a vision of a church community where no one is 'pushed to the fringe.' Rather, we see 'intergenerational mutuality' where each person is embraced as an essential contributing member in relationship with the others, sharing in love, wisdom and common purpose. It is a vision worthy of pursuit."--Julia Hindmarsh, R.N., B.S.N., M.P.H., instructor, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, Department of Public Health, retired "With *A Vision for the Aging Church*, Drs. Houston and Parker challenge the church to reimagine its ministry by and to seniors, encouraging the church to embrace and honor the contributions that can be made by its senior members while more effectively ministering to their needs. The book provides an important bridge between the scriptural imperatives which must drive the church's senior mission and the realities of aging in the United States at the start of the twenty-first century. To be effective in ministry, church leaders must understand the basic medical, social, legal and spiritual issues facing our aging population. The authors have effectively identified many of the issues to be addressed by the church and have provided the scriptural inspiration to move churches forward."--Hugh M. Lee, director, Elder Law Clinic, University of Alabama School of Law "A *Vision for the Aging Church* brings together both scientific learning and spiritual wisdom on the increasingly important issue of aging in our society today. We have here a valuable resource for professionals, pastors and laypersons everywhere, a groundbreaking work in the field."--Timothy George, founding dean of Beeson Divinity School of Samford University and the general editor of the *Reformation Commentary on Scripture* "This book explores the role of senior citizens in today's church and is a ringing indictment of the lack of respect, concern and caring for our seniors found in most of today's congregations. The historical roots and problems are explored and remedies and solutions are proposed. This is a must-read for sociologists, social/behavior scientists, gerontologists, priests, pastors and ministers of our modern churches."--Daniel K. Winstead, M.D., Robert G. Heath Professor and Chairman, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Tulane University School of Medicine "A *Vision for the Aging Church* offers much-needed insight into the future of our aging congregations. Houston and Parker offer sage advice to both the elderly and their pastors and congregations for best practices of serving--and being served by--the seniors in our churches."--Harold G. Koenig, M.D., director of the Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health at Duke University Medical Center "Houston and Parker have written a critical book for our day. They detail

well how the prejudicial practice of 'ageism' by Western culture and the church has far-reaching and devastating results for our time. As one with an interest in spiritual formation, I'm grateful that we finally have someone providing a vision for the church regarding how the elderly are a potential powerhouse of spiritual depth and vitality as well as examples in life and sacrificial caring for others. Without elderly persons' profound leadership, involvement and interaction, the church, family and society are destined to become a truncated community bent on self-referential consumerism and impersonal overproductivity. God help us in opening to this timely message."--John H. Coe, director, Institute for Spiritual Formation, Biola University"James Houston and Michael Parker provide a wake-up call to the church in *A Vision for the Aging Church*. Despite biblical commands to honor and care for older adults, the church has failed to value the lives of the rapidly increasing numbers of older members by excluding them from ministry and failing to provide help for them and their caregivers when it is needed. This book challenges older adults to embrace their important God-given roles as leaders and elders in the modern church. Every church leader and seminary student needs to read this book and heed the call to let the elders enlighten them. This book makes it clear that rejecting ageism not only offers hope for spiritual renewal within the church but also for society as a whole."--Richard M. Allman, M.D., professor of medicine and director of the Center for Aging and Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics, and Palliative Care at The University of Alabama at Birmingham"The book's spiritual wisdom, the personal honesty of the authors, the up-to-date research on aging, and the critique of ageism in both the culture at large and in the church make this a very important work. I have found it encouraging and challenging both personally and clinically and recommend it wholeheartedly regardless of one's vocation or place in life."--Stephen F. Voorhies, M.D., Chief of Staff, Central Washington Hospital, Wenatchee, Washington"What a wealth of wisdom and insights on the future church! So many people speak of the 'future church' as being young, unchurched and skeptical. In reality, the future church will be old, spiritually inclined and receptive. This book is a great resource for leaders of the real future church!"--Charles Arn, professor of outreach, Wesley Seminary""I am distinctly honored to call James Houston and Michael Parker friends and colleagues in mission. In *A Vision for the Aging Church*, these two cultural 'evangelists' advocate for a paradigm shift in both church and society--one in which our elders are proudly embraced and engrafted into vibrant leadership and ministry. As a dementia neurologist, I know that most of our elders will eventually require caregivers. And caregivers need many more resources than are currently available for them. In following the call sounded forth in this fine book we should be assured that we have honored our elders, validated their unique place in church and society, and been true to the highest of all callings. Read this book and be inspired!"--Daniel C. Potts, M.D., associate clinical professor, College of Community Health Sciences, The University of Alabama School of Medicine""This is a resource that provides fresh insight for ministry to and with senior adults. Houston and Parker challenge both pastors and congregations to see their senior members as a 'living curriculum' for the generations that follow. They also challenge the church to be present as a resource for seniors and their caregivers. Pastors and church leaders would do well to engage this book as a resource for planning and enriching ministry in a local setting. . . . This insightful and thought-provoking book is both a theological and a sociological gift to the church that promises to renew ministry for and by seniors."--Tom Tickner, Interpretation, April 2014"*A Vision for the Aging Church* is an impressive and valuable work for any church leader in our aging society. Houston and Parker provide many insights that society in general and churches in particular will face in the near future. . . . I personally was blessed greatly by the careful research and insightful work of James Houston and Michael Parker. The young and older reader will be blessed, and perhaps a 'new vision' for your church will emerge. I commend *A Vision for the Aging Church* to be carefully digested and applied in any local church's situation."--Leo Smith, Baptist Standard, June 11, 2012"This book challenges pastors, lay leaders, and congregations to embrace healthy attitudes and actions toward aging adults, for the sake of themselves, for the future of the church, and for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ."--Sue Edwards, Bibliotheca Sacra, April-June 2012"A passionate and informative call to the church to embrace, learn from, and empower our elders."--Sojourners, February 2012

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