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PROBLEMS OF OLDER ADULTS AS RELATED TO  
THE PROGRAM OF THE CHURCH

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Dedicated to the loving memory  
of my mother  
whose needs in her later maturity  
gave the inspiration  
for this study.

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## INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

### A. The Statement of the Problem

The constantly growing number of persons over sixty-five years of age with a possible life expectancy of thirteen or more years has begun to be recognized as a problem of major importance. As life expectancy increases, the period of retirement, together with problems of financial support and the occupation of time, is extended. Medical science has added years to life; the great problem confronting society today is how to add happy living to the years. To be sure, adjustment to the later years of life is the responsibility of the aging individual, but there is need for a more understanding attitude from society regarding the potential value of the aging individual as a person in the community. The responsibility of providing the agencies whereby the aging person can adjust himself happily and feel useful falls not only on society in general, but especially on the church. The church, more than any other agency, has the unique resources for meeting man's spiritual needs at any age - that of directing the individual to the deepening feeling of inner security in his companionship with God.



## B. The Significance of the Problem

Oscar R. Ewing, in his opening address before the first National Conference on Aging, stated:

"The personal potentials of the individual older person are vastly - almost terrifying - influenced by the way America lives. Too often we have no jobs for older people. Too often we retire people who are willing and able to continue working. Too often we have no room for older people in our apartment civilization; the old person finds himself crowded into the corner, or out of the home altogether. Too often we have no facilities where older people can enjoy the leisure-time activities, the creative skills, the cultural enjoyments, which are theirs by as much right as anyone else's. Too often we have forgotten that older people deserve the respect which their maturity calls for: not simply the respect of the Boy Scout leading the old lady across the avenue, but the deep respect of society for the human being who wishes to preserve his dignity, his self-confidence, his independence, and his capacity to enjoy life - and, beyond all this, the respect for his capacity to contribute to the total life of the community."<sup>1</sup>

This statement has set the tone for all agencies as they determine what is to be done for persons in their later years. The value that is placed upon the older persons is the indication of how persons are valued as persons. This, in turn, is reflected in the attitudes and hope of the younger generation who are watching. The older adults have much to give from their wisdom and experience to the younger generation; what they give and what is received depends on how happily the older adult has been able, through the help of society, to adjust himself.

. . . . .

1. Address by Oscar R. Ewing, before the Conference on Aging, Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C., August 13, 1950.

### C. The Delimitation of the Problem

Since happy adjustment to aging depends not alone on man's inner spiritual resources but to a certain extent on the response of others to his problems, it has seemed worth-while to make a study of what the responses of society have been. Then the leaders in the church will be better able to see their responsibility and their particular ability to provide programs which can meet the spiritual and social needs of older people, which society does not meet.

### D. The Method of Procedure

The first chapter of this study will be devoted to the needs of older adults which have grown out of the problems which they face in a more or less hostile society. The lack of understanding on the part of society has affected the individual to the point that he often cannot make a satisfactory adjustment to his later years.

The second chapter will be divided into two main discussions; (1) the discovery of what society has been able to learn about the process of aging through research and experiment; (2) description of certain patterns of action which society has tried - to meet the most distressing problems of

the aging person.

The third chapter will take up the religious ministry of the church - its resources for developing inner security to meet problems throughout life; the opportunity of the church to help the aging to continue spiritual growth; the responsibility of the church to establish kindly attitudes toward the aged and to provide for their welfare.

#### E. Sources of Data

The writer of this thesis has made use of the studies and reports of leading programs in the field of aging, both on the secular and on the religious level. The writer has also learned much by observation, through visits to various people and places concerned with the care of the aging, and through correspondence.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEMS AND NEEDS OF

OLDER ADULTS IN RELATION TO THE ATTITUDES OF SOCIETY

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A. Introduction

In the last decade the attention of certain groups in society has been called to the consideration of an ever increasing group - the older generation. In August, 1952, the number of persons sixty-five years old and over had reached the high level of thirteen million people. Medical experts also pointed out a possible life expectancy of thirteen or more years to persons who reach the age of sixty-five. Our youth-centered culture is inclined to place its emphasis on the welfare of children and young adults, and to set aside provision for the middle-aged and aged to the point of neglect. Often society shows the latter an attitude of thoughtless misunderstanding and hostility. It took World War II to show that older adults were useful and greatly needed during the labor shortage - to keep up the required level of production for both civilian and military needs. Further study has shown that older adults possess many other assets and potentialities that society needs. Nevertheless changes in our way of living, emotional conflicts between the

generations and a widespread lack of sympathetic understanding cause in everyone a fear of growing old.

Paul Benjamin Maves in his book, The Christian Religious Education of Older People, says:

"Aging inevitably involves losses and necessary adjustments in any period, but the adjustments that persons have to make after sixty now are more difficult and more numerous than they were for those who lived to be sixty a half century ago."<sup>1</sup>

It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss the trends in adult population, the potential strength of older adults, their problems and resulting needs in society, the need for a better understanding on the part of society of the potentialities of the aging, and the responsibility which the aging individual should assume if he is to succeed in adjusting himself happily to the problems he faces.

## B. Older People in Society

### 1. Population Facts and Trends

According to the findings of the Committee on Aging and Geriatrics of the Federal Security Agency of the United States, the growth of the population in this nation since the turn of the century shows some startling trends. Not only has the total population doubled, but the number of persons

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1. Paul Benjamin Maves: The Christian Religious Education of Older People, pp. 3-4.

forty-five to sixty-four years of age has tripled, while the number of persons sixty-five and over has quadrupled. In 1900 only one out of every twenty-five persons was sixty-five or over; today the ratio is one out of every twelve. Between 1940-1950 this group increased thirty-six percent. With the currently increasing number of 400,000 persons a year in this age-group, population experts expect the present-day number of thirteen million adults upward of sixty-five years of age to reach something like twenty-two million by 1975. Women in this group outnumber men ten to nine, for women have a longer life expectancy than men.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Their Potential Strength

Older adults by reason of their numbers and their increasing proportion in the total population form an important social group. Their problems and potentialities, from this standpoint alone, deserve some consideration by the rest of society. The aging make up a large part of the voting population and, by reason of their number of votes, can, as a group, influence in consideration from government to the disadvantage of other groups, such as the mentally ill who cannot express their needs. On the other hand they possess wisdom, judgment, insight and perspective - assets which they have

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2. Cf. Federal Security Agency, Committee on Aging and Geriatrics: Fact Book on Aging, p. 1.

acquired from long years of experience in living. Maves in his book, Older People and the Church, says that it is wise for society to plan intelligently together with the aging for their needs and to help them find emotional satisfaction as well as physical comfort in order to forestall an age-group from being molded into a self-conscious minority.<sup>3</sup>

Many older adults, in their deepening faith in God and His work, have developed rare understanding in human relationships and in compassion for the less fortunate. They find ways of sharing all this with others. Retired people who have financial security often continue using their wisdom in sharing community responsibility. A retired doctor lets it be known that the indigent may come to him for help without worrying about the fee; a retired lawyer gives counsel to those who cannot afford to pay. A minister retires to a town in the vicinity of the state prison and gives time and spiritual comfort to lost souls within its walls. Others visit people who are ill or in need; they take part in welfare drives and many other activities in the community. They find ways of helping with the ongoing work of the church.<sup>4</sup>

Aging adults have developed work habits, loyalty and interest in doing a job well; they possess those skills which are needed greatly in a society which must provide not only for

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3. Cf. Paul Benjamin Maves: Older People and the Church, pp. 44-45.

4. Cf. Jean and Jess Ogden, "Sharing Community Responsibility, The Annals, Vol. 279, January 1952, pp. 103-104.



normal needs in the United States, but also for military needs in far away places in a period of war. Many have the health and the desire to be a part of the producing population. With a growing increase of non-productive children and young people at one end and an increasing number of non-productive older adults at the other, the burden of financing and producing for the total population will soon become intolerable for the present age-restricted labor group; our position among the nations will be weakened if production is curtailed. In 1900 there were thirteen persons in the producing labor group for every person over sixty-five; today there are only eight; by the time the present teen-agers reach sixty-five, it is quite likely the ratio will be only four to one. Consequently there is need of encouraging self-support among the senior citizens of the nation in the face of such a trend.<sup>5</sup>

### C. Problems and Needs of Older Adults

#### 1. Employment

At the turn of the century, fifty percent of the population lived in a rural community where it was possible for the older worker to taper off gradually among people and places he knew well. But the rapid industrialization of

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5. Cf. New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Problems of the Aging: Age Is No Barrier, 1952, p. 7.

society since that day has sent them into the cities to find employment until there are now eighty percent of the population in urban centers and only twenty in rural areas. The employer in our youth-centered civilization is reluctant to hire workers even at the age of fifty, because he thinks the older worker possesses less ability, less adaptability, less speed than the younger worker and that he is a greater risk in the field of industrial accidents. Consequently the older worker finds himself in a rather discouraging position if he loses his job. By the time he reaches his middle sixties he is all too often faced with compulsory retirement. This means lowered income and a possible loss of his former status in the community, since he cannot spend as much as he did, besides an excess of leisure time which he does not know how to use. There is need of pre-retirement programs to give education and training to aging workers as to what they can do in later years to supplement their reduced income. There is need of job-counseling service to help older workers find not only a job, but the proper kind of employment for their years; there is need of rehabilitation services and sheltered workshops. There is also need of legislation to protect older workers.<sup>6</sup>

. . . . .

6. Ibid., pp. 23-32.

## 2. Financial Status

The Fact Book On Aging reveals pertinent facts on the income of the aged. The barest essentials of decent housing and daily living require a budget of approximately eighteen hundred dollars yearly for an elderly couple. In 1950 forty-three percent of families headed by a person sixty-five years of age and over had an income of less than fifteen hundred dollars; thirty percent received less than a thousand and fifteen percent had less than five hundred dollars. The fact that many such families own some kind of a home helps some. Even with Federal Security benefits, with retirement pensions provided by certain organizations, with old-age assistance or personal savings the picture is not good for the majority of older adults. At the end of 1951, fewer than one in every three persons sixty-five years old or over was employed at all and of these a large proportion were self-employed. Half of them owned farms. One in four had old age and survivors insurance benefits; one in five was receiving old-age assistance; two to three in every ten of this group were getting their income from personal investments and pensions, or were being supported by relatives.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore those persons on OASI benefits are restricted to earning not more than seventy-five dollars a

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7. Cf. Federal Security Agency, Committee on Aging and Geriatrics, op. cit., pp.2-3.

month, even if they can find employment. Consequently the average older adult cannot meet his financial needs alone. He must depend on the understanding help of others and on a more sympathetic attitude from society. However, since dependence is distressing to the aging person, he must also bring the most understanding cooperation possible to the situation.

### 3. Living Arrangements

The migration of people from a rural life in large houses to an urban life in small homes and apartments has affected housing to such an extent that quite often there is no room for dependent parents to be housed happily in the homes of their children. Besides, younger adults find the high cost of living and the rearing of their children almost as much as they can possibly finance. In the rural areas fifty years ago one found large houses with many rooms and inexpensive help. Each home had its own gardens, chickens, and often a cow. There was room for the aging parent or relative, and providing food and care was not the problem that it is in the urban area today. Younger adults now have more expenses and problems than anyone thought possible at the turn of the century. Those who have affection for their parents find it very difficult to follow the Fifth Commandment. The

daughter is willing but the rest of the family does not have the same affection and interest to take the aging person into the home. Some families are reluctant to help at all. A mother of twelve children, after losing her husband and her income, suffers loneliness and insecurity as she travels with her belongings in two suitcases and spends each month in a different household.

Nor are older adults content to live in crowded quarters with their growing children. The noise, the confusion, the rushing about, the thoughtlessness of young people disturb and confuse them. They need quiet and serenity, independence in a home of their own, a place where they can have familiar possessions they have loved for many years, a place where they can entertain their friends and do as they please. They resent being restricted by their children. They want to love and understand their children and in turn to be loved and understood by them and their family.

The "three-generation" household in crowded quarters in the urban area is a difficult problem. But aging parents most often do not have income enough to finance comfortable shelter and to pay for the help they need. Something has to be done in community planning, and society is called upon to make possible for older adults the kind of housing for which

they can pay so that there need not be so many occasions for the emotional and psychological conflicts which are usually apparent in "three-generation" households.

The worst housed segment of our population, according to the report on housing for the aged in Age Is No Barrier, is the aged. Some live in houses or apartments with sliding rugs on slippery floors, with dangerous equipment and slippery tubs, with poorly lighted halls and rooms, with stairs and steps which take toll of the heart. Some live squeezed in with relatives with not a room to call their own. One finds others in dingy rooming houses, in deteriorating neighborhoods, over a store or in a back flat. A small proportion of the population is fortunate enough to gain admittance into a church home. The unwanted are often placed in state mental institutions where there is neither enough help nor enough room and equipment for happy living.

The public has concentrated on building homes for veterans, for young family groups, and middle-aged groups, but too little interest has been given to the right kind of housing for oldsters. There is real need of new thinking and new legislation in order that enough adequate living arrangements may be provided for the increasing number of older adults.<sup>8</sup>

. . . . .

8. Cf. New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Problems of the Aging, op. cit., pp. 110-112.

The findings of the Federal Security Agency report that at the end of 1951 nine million of the thirteen million persons over sixty-five, that is seven persons out of every ten in this older group, were trying to maintain some kind of a home of their own. Of these, two million had a wife, husband, or relative living with them. About two and three-quarter million others, two out of ten, were living in the homes of relatives; three out of four in this group were women. Slightly more than 700,000 persons were living in institutions, hotels, or large rooming houses. The indigent often were forced to live in places the young adult would not endure.<sup>9</sup>

Church homes and sheltered homes of other sympathetic organizations meet a great need for the few who are fortunate enough to gain admittance. Waiting lists are apt to be long since persons in these homes live longer. There is need of many more subsidized homes of this type where the older person with lowered income may without loss of dignity ask admittance and look forward to living happily in comfortable quarters with kindly supervision, friendly fellowship, and with the assurance that he will have good care even in illness.

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9. Cf. Federal Security Agency, Committee on Aging and Geriatrics, op. cit., p. 1.

#### 4. Health Services

Financial insecurity involves another great problem, the adequacy of health services. The physical and mental health of our aged depends partly on how well the individual can finance enough medical care and partly on the attitude of physicians. Thomas C. Desmond says:

"And the attitude of our physicians reflects community attitudes. In a youth-minded culture, the aged are regarded as "second-class" citizens. They not only lack the glamour of youth, but medically they have glamourless diseases which do not lend themselves to dramatic crises and dramatic cures; rather they have long term, drawn out degenerative diseases which can be slowed down but often resist cure."<sup>11</sup>

There is an urgent need for physicians to specialize in geriatrics and chronic diseases and to sit on local committees for older adults. Their advice is needed in planning the establishment of geriatric wards in hospitals, rehabilitation centers and health education that the aging may know better how to meet their problems. Some attention needs to be given to the provision of nursing homes with kindly efficient care where people can afford to pay their way. In 1950 only one out of four had hospitalization. This kind of protection is not easy to get at a reasonable rate unless one belongs to an employed group. Even then benefits are in many cases reduced with age. The same situation is true in many health insurance policies. Expenses in hospitals,

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11. Cf. New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Problems of the Aging, op. cit., p. 35.



nursing homes, and doctor's fees are beyond the reach of the average aging person in a long illness. Often he must depend on the aid of a relative thus draining the resources and vitality of the one who helps.

A daughter in the middle forties, with an annual salary of 4500 dollars, watched her aging parents, who owned a little home in a small town and had a pension of some eighty dollars a month, carry on with the help she could give them. Illness, in the form of cancer, struck them both. They needed kindly and efficient care. Nurses were reluctant to take the responsibility and a housekeeper could not be found; the hospital had no room for a long case; nursing homes were unwilling to receive them both. Even if any one of these plans had materialized, the expense would have been from twenty to thirty dollars a day. One lived two months, the other eight months. The daughter was fortunate enough to get a leave of absence of ten months, without salary. With the help of a night nurse every second night, she carried the burden of nursing care but with complete exhaustion of her savings and her strength.

Our communities have long known that public health is purchasable, but have been interested primarily in the welfare of infants and children. Such health education and

assistance is possible for the middle-aged and elderly. The challenge lies in bringing to the upper-age group knowledge of proper nutrition, mental health and disease prevention, in order that a healthier, happier older population may be developed. There is need also of clinics with sympathetic, efficient, interested doctors, more hospital resources, more home nursing agencies at a cost which our older adults can afford. Aging people are eager to be useful and happy participating members of society. It is the responsibility of society to make all this possible.<sup>12</sup>

##### 5. Psychological Adjustments

Access to adequate health services, comfortable living arrangements, financial security, and the opportunity to be useful in the field of production are tangible things which society can help to provide for older adults. Yet, by far, the greatest thing which the human individual needs at any age is a sense of personal security in his relations with other people. This depends, for the most part, on the inner security which the individual develops, yet the attitude which other people show toward him is an important factor. Older adults need to be loved, to be wanted, to be listened to, and to be thought competent. They need inner

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12. Ibid., pp. 35-39.

peace in companionship with God. They yearn for fellowship with friends of their own kind. They are eager to belong to their family, to their community, to their church and to be a part of life rather than a "cast-off" from the business of living.

Society tends to undervalue or even to ignore the capacity of older persons and to put them "on the shelf"; to consider them as needing a planned second childhood; to assume that they have had their day and that they should be content to sit and to wait for what comes. This attitude casts its influence upon aging people to the point that they dread growing old. But society does not realize its mistaken attitude and its thoughtlessness just because it does not understand. The culture in which we live has the capacity of having understanding, and our people are good when the challenge reaches the mind and the heart. A delicate old lady ninety years old had no funds, no relatives, but through her church had found comfort in a home. When the time came that she needed nursing care and later hospital care, another denomination provided the funds. Now she is recovering from a broken hip at the age of one hundred years. Give younger adults education in the facts of the whole growing process, the correct evaluation of the

capacity of older persons to be useful citizens, the challenge to recognize the individual for his worth and their attitude will be changed. There is the hope that some of the younger adults will turn their interest toward geriatrics and will fit themselves to be sympathetic intelligent advisers to older persons and to community agencies as well; that old and young will understand one another better and that they will plan together the solution of their joint problems.

As George Lawton says in his article, Happiness In Old Age:

"If we devoted to the problem of later maturity the same thought, social imagination, and well-directed effort that we have given to the problems of children, it might be possible to bring about a happier old age for the many millions now in their early or middle maturity."<sup>13</sup>

#### D. The Challenges to Older Adults

The realization that one is growing older and that activity must be slower; the retirement from one's occupational interest and separation from his friends there; the necessity of finding a home away from the family group; the loss of friends by death and for other causes; the critical attitude of the younger generation toward the aging -

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13. George Lawton: Happiness in Old Age, National Committee for Mental Hygiene, Inc., p. 7.

all these are shocks unless one has been prepared for them some time in advance. These realizations are as distressing to older adults as the shocks of adolescence are to teen-agers. In either situation there is need of sympathetic understanding on the part of all people concerned and facing the facts.

Some say that aging brings new and significant challenges and that the time comes long before the shocks of age set in to take inventory of one's self. He who has a purpose in his later maturity may have the nimble step and the joyous heart if he will take care of himself. The first place to visit is his doctor's office, to ask for a complete medical examination. Together with his doctor he can plan how much he can do and how he can have a healthier, happier future. Let him study next the matter of his occupation and his assets, the possibility of part time employment when retirement is before him, and a feasible way of making his lowered income meet his needs.

He needs to think positively about his near relatives, how he can get along with them and how he can live either with them or without them. He should use his mind to keep on growing all through his years in order to find new interests and new tasks; to take inventory of his abil-

ities and of the things he has always wanted to do, but for which he has not had the time; to look for ways not only of keeping in touch with the friends he has made but also ways to meet new friends; to inquire into the activities of clubs for older adults and of the various organizations in his church; to consider calls for volunteer help in the agencies of his community. Most of all, he needs to take inventory of his spiritual life - to join a Bible class, to attend church regularly, and to persist in gaining fellowship with people there, to develop a closer companionship with God.

And if a chronic disease or a handicap comes, in which medical science cannot correct the damage done, there is still a hopeful challenge there - the will to live with it and to live as normal a life as is humanly possible.

Maves in his book, The Best Is Yet to Be, says:

"Even the person who is confined to his bed, able to move but little, has an opportunity to be creative in the area of personal and spiritual relationships..... he has a responsibility to use that capacity in God's service. Such a person may practice the stewardship of his disposition.....striving for victory over pain. He may pray for others in the family, in the community, and even may pray for the whole world, that it may be saved."14

In a nearby city, in the month of December, the award of "The Personality of the Year" was made to a woman

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14. Paul Benjamin Maves: The Best Is Yet to Be, p. 44.

in her later years who had been a chronic invalid from the age of eleven. She had carried on a business of her own, taking subscriptions for magazines with such radiant friendliness that her friends continued it for her when she became so crippled and eventually so blind that she could no longer do anything for herself. She lies helpless in bed - the strings to two radios attached to the fingers of the one hand in which she has the power of motion. She listens thus to the programs she wishes to hear. No one has ever heard her complain. Her interest in her friends is so kindly that she is still doing a work of stewardship in God's kingdom.

The church and the Christian Faith, according to Dr. Joseph R. Sizoo, has the answer to the search for inner peace. He urges the aging to accept old age and to live life through hopefully. He says: "Life is a school, a race, a voyage, a growth."<sup>15</sup> He asks older adults to solve the problems of the autumn years not in terms of "why", but "how". He stresses the opportunity one has in old age for service to others, for worship, for meditation, and for prayer. Thus the aging person may find assurance that God forgives, that He is with him and does not let him go. And to crown his abiding faith he finds sure ground for his hope of eternal life as he reads the promise of Christ:

"Because I live, ye shall live also."

. . . . .

15. Dr. Joseph R. Sizoo, "The Answer of Christian Faith", a contributing chapter to the book, These Harvest Years, p. 249.

### E. Summary

It has been discovered that there are thirteen million persons sixty-five years old and over in the United States at the present time. According to the trends in the population this age-group may reach a possible twenty-two million by 1975. Their problems are many because of the way in which society lives. Emphasis has been placed on the problems of children and youth almost to the neglect of the aging group.

The potential strength of older adults is important in the fields of voting, of industry, of professional life and also in their helpful service in solving community problems. World War II found both the laborer and the professional worker in their later years capable and loyal during the labor shortage. Forced retirement brings to the majority of aging adults inadequate income to meet their physical needs. It brings to them also abundance of leisure time which they may not know how to use.

The shocks which older adults experience are extremely distressing. There is need of their facing the situation and of planning their later years in advance of



retirement; there is need of taking inventory of their assets and liabilities in the middle years - finances, health, social contacts, and their spiritual life - in order that the adjustment in their later years may be more happily made.

CHAPTER II

THE RESPONSE OF SOCIETY TO THE PROBLEMS  
AND NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS

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AND NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS

A. Introduction.

It was not until the early thirties that the problems and needs of older adults, which were discussed in the preceding chapter, began to assume any great importance in society. The sudden realization in the depression years - that neither the community nor the state could guarantee financial security to the large numbers of unemployed older workers and older women who had no support - became a matter of national concern. The Social Security Act of 1935, with its old-age insurance and old-age assistance benefits, eased the situation some. Yet, when the members of the Federal Security Administration began to administer these benefits, they found other problems facing older people and became deeply concerned. About the same time the National Health Survey pointed out the grave lack of medical care for the illnesses of older people.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that there was almost nothing available on either the process of aging or its problems and that very little had been done by way of solution, except in the case of the

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1. Cf. Federal Security Agency: Man and His Years, p. 6.

indigent, concerned interested persons in society immediately. They decided there was need of considerable study, experiment, and exchange of ideas before wise planning and action could take place.

It will be the purpose of this chapter to set forth the response that was made by society. The first part of the chapter will trace the growing tide of interest which was expressed in research and experiment and in conferences and publications. The second part will be devoted to descriptions of certain patterns of action which are now taking place here and there as a result of the positive thinking of certain leaders in the field of the aging. The patterns will be limited to the three most basic needs, which old-timers in this field have found to be most urgent, - somewhere to live, something to do, and someone to care.

## B. The Growing Tide of Interest in the Aging

### 1. Research

Scientific attention was first focused on gerontology in 1937 when the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation sponsored a club for research on aging and financed the first of a long series of conferences on the problems of aging. The proceedings of

this first conference, which were edited by Professor Edmund V. Cowdry, became the definitive medical textbook in geriatrics. The Public Health Service established the Gerontological Research Unit to make further studies. Two National organizations - The American Geriatrics Society (1942) and the Gerontological Society, Inc. (1944) - were formed to promote further research and better medical services for the aging.

During the same decade the Bureau of Labor Statistics made its first study of employer attitudes toward older workers. The Social Science Research Council began studies on social adjustments in old age. A little later the American Psychological Association and the Department of Adult Education of the National Education Association set up special divisions on aging.

In 1948 the National Health Assembly reported there were many complex problems related to, and yet apart from, chronic illness. Following a recommendation of the Assembly, the Federal Security Administrator established a Working Committee on the Aging; this committee made a special study of the problems and sent a progress report to several hundred workers who were experimenting in the field and asked for comment.<sup>2</sup>

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2. Ibid. pp.7-8.

## 2. Experimental Programs

In the field a number of successful programs had developed. The program of the Old Age Counseling Center in San Francisco, which had been founded several years ago by Lillian Martin, retired professor of psychology at Leland-Stanford, had become a national pattern. The Institute of Human Adjustment at the University of Michigan was leading the nation in its pioneering job of educational programs for older people. The Desmond Committee in New York State, through its inauguration of a series of hearings and reports by experts in the field of the aging and through its timely recommendations for needed legislation in behalf of the aging, was commanding national attention. Cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, Cleveland and Denver were attracting attention because of their studies and programs. The Federal Council of The Churches of Christ, realizing the responsibility of the religious leaders toward the aging, directed a two-year study of religious ministry to older people.

Furthermore, community workers were initiating programs in recreation and education, in counseling and living arrangements, in rehabilitation and job placement. They were finding enthusiastic response from older people and their families.<sup>2</sup>

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2. Ibid., p. 8.

### 3. National Conferences

These interested groups took the initiative of asking the Federal Security Agency for some means by which they might become acquainted with other workers in the field and share experiences. In the Spring of 1950, the President of the United States asked the Federal Security Administrator for an extensive report of the so-called aging problem. In answer to all these requests the first National Conference on Aging was held in Washington, D.C. in August of that year.

Over eight hundred delegates, outstanding workers in every field of work for the aging, assembled from all parts of the country to explore new trends in eleven different areas of activity. The whole session became a forum-type of exploratory conference. No action was proposed or taken by the delegates as a whole. Ideas were exchanged; group thinking shaped the reports. Certain emphases were especially noted: that the assets of the aged are needed in our communities; that the whole process of aging, from early maturity to the end of life, needs to be understood by all adult age-groups; that adult education is important in the middle years to enable the aging adult how to plan better the way to meet the challenge of later maturity; that age is not determined by years alone, but by one's physical and mental capabilities; that all of us

in our responsibility to God, have a responsibility for and toward our fellow men.

The consensus of opinion was that it is the local community which can best meet the responsibility of planning not only for, but with, their older friends and neighbors as to how they can enjoy their later years.<sup>3</sup>

The appointment of a permanent interdepartmental Committee on Aging and Geriatrics was made by the Federal Security Agency shortly after the Conference. This is the clearinghouse for information on all fields of research on aging and the source of guidance for any community, organization or individual concerned with the welfare of the aging.

In September of the following year, a large number of national leaders were invited to join with some one hundred and fifty foreign experts in the field of geriatrics to share their experiences - at the second International Gerontological Congress in St. Louis, Missouri.

#### 4. Publications

Bibliographies, pages long, are now available. Publications on every phase of the problems of aging have been steadily increasing. The list of titles is almost overwhelming. Important among these for serious study is

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3. Ibid. pp. 290-296.



Man and His Years, the group report of the proceedings of the first National Conference on Aging. A four-page pamphlet "Aging", containing reports of new programs and ideas, is published frequently as a supplement.

The "older-years" trilogy - Living Through the Older Years, Planning the Older Years, Growing in the Older Years - deals with the reports of experts at the three institutes of the University of Michigan. The most recent report of the Desmond Committee of New York State, Age Is No Barrier, commands nation-wide interest. The periodicals, "The Journal of Gerontology" and "Geriatrics" are entirely devoted to articles on the Aging. The entire January, 1952, issue of "The Annals" is given to "Social Contribution by the Aging". "Recreation" features articles on programs for the aging.

In the popular vein are titles like The Harvest Years, You and Your Aging Parents, Look Younger and Live Longer, The Middle Years, How to Retire.

The American people seem to have accepted the challenge of an increasing aging population. Communities have begun to make the choice as to how their senior citizens shall be treated by the community in which they live.

C. Patterns of Action

1. Living Arrangements

Ollie Randall, consultant on services for the aged to the Community Service Society of New York City, places "somewhere to live" at the head of the list of needs of older people. She maintains there are certain rights which should be considered in planning for and with older people. They have the right to personal privacy; the right to choose the kind of place in which to live - near church, library, shopping and transportation; the right to share the advantages of what modern science knows about physical and mental illness; the right to opportunity for association with others.<sup>4</sup>

Whether the thirteen million persons over sixty-five years of age in this nation are to enjoy these rights depends on the response of all the people in a community to their specific needs. There is need of adequate non-profit, tax-exempt, specially designed housing to meet the desire of the great majority to maintain their own home. There is great need of the knowledge as to where the aging person, with dignity, may go to find counsel on problems which may arise. There is also need of planning various types of semi-independent and sheltered housing for those who cannot take

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4. Cf. Ollie Randall, "Living Arrangements to Meet the Needs of Older People", in *Planning the Older Years* (Wilma Donahue and Clark Tibbitts, Eds.), pp. 32, 38-51.

care of themselves. There is evidence that response is being made by society in the new trends.

a. The Cottage Colony

A successful example of the cottage colony is located on a three-hundred-acre plot on the outskirts of the town of Millville, New Jersey. Several years ago, community leaders, who had become interested in better housing for their older citizens, built a central community house and thirteen small houses to rent for eight dollars a month. Each house has a livingroom, bedroom, kitchen and bath, with a coal-burning range to provide heat and hot water. From a small screened porch, residents look out upon their gardens and visit with neighbors who pass by. A policeman's whistle, outside the front door, can summon aid at any time.

The superintendent, who lives in the community house, is a trained social worker accessible for counseling and assistance when there is need. To the community house residents come to make a telephone call, to plan a shopping trip, to get their mail; they read in the library, sew together, and play games; they meet together on Thursday evening for recreation fun or attend the non-sectarian church service on Sunday.

The city provides municipal services and the property

is tax-exempt. Repair jobs provide the occasion for willing volunteer helpers from the town. The colony continues to grow and certain provisions have been made for those who are able and who wish to pay for additional facilities. Transportation to and from town can easily be provided.

Personal privacy, independence, help when needed, and fellowship are at hand. Furthermore, residents feel they have the freedom to choose how they shall live, and to go and come as they please. And, most of all, they feel they are paying their way.<sup>5</sup>

b. Companion Apartments

Tompkins Square House in New York City, owned and operated for more than twenty years by the Community Service Society of that city, is another example of sheltered independence for older people. Companion apartments provide the answer for those who wish personal privacy and group experience in the same unit.

The standard basic unit in this type of living arrangements consists of seven pleasant rooms with running water around a large living-dining-kitchen; an eighth room, with a small office, houses the senior resident who has specific responsibilities. The main room and toilet facilities are shared. Each person has a food locker and space for supplies. The management provides for the laundry of linens, the regular cleaning

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5. Cf. Margaret Hickey, Better Living for Older People, Ladies Home Journal, April, 1951, p.25.

of shared facilities and weekly cleaning of individual rooms. The main room is the center for leisure-time activities. Additional services, such as the help of a capable housekeeper-cook, a practical nurse, a caseworker from the counseling center, or the fellowship of a friendly visitor, can be more easily shared in a neighboring unit like this.

The arrangement provides maximum independence and group protection at a minimum cost. Residents are near transportation and find it quite possible to continue in the activities in the community. The pity is that there are so few units of satisfying housing for older people available.<sup>6</sup>

c. New York State "Set-Aside" Housing Order

On November 26, 1951, the dawn of a new era in housing for older persons was proclaimed by the New York State Housing Commissioner in this announcement:

"In all state-aided public housing projects in the future it will be required that approximately five per cent of the dwelling units be set aside for the aging and that upon application from the local authorities, this may be increased as the need therefor is shown."<sup>7</sup>

Small apartments are to be of two types - the one for aging couples, the other for couples or single persons sixty-five to seventy years old and older. Costs are expected to be nine dollars per room. Facilities will be particularly designed to provide for safety and comfort of older residents.

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6. Cf. Hertha Kraus, "Housing Our Older Citizens", The Annals, January, 1952, pp. 134-135.

7. New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Problems of the Aging: Age Is No Barrier, 1952, p. 12.

Recreational facilities are suggested wherever possible. Communities are advised strongly to prevent isolation and socialization of housing units for any group. All people, especially older persons, need to live as natural a life as possible in that neighborhood group where they can be happiest.

All three of these plans are a step forward in planning the kind of housing in which the older person, on reduced income, can find independence and protection at the same time. Many more such units are needed for the nine million people sixty-five years and older who somehow maintain a home of their own. One has only to visit the poorest housing in a community to learn of the large numbers of older persons who are poorly housed.

#### d. Resident Homes

For those who do not wish to maintain an independent home or who may be physically handicapped to the point that they cannot take care of themselves, other living arrangements have to be provided. Less than three million older persons, by reason of personal choice or because of necessity, live with relatives. Others seek boarding homes, residential hotels, and homes which are sponsored by churches and other philanthropic-minded individuals and organizations. The last place the older person turns to is the public tax-supported institution. Social

Security benefits, private pensions and annuities together with personal savings have made it possible for more and more older persons to pay their way.

Too often the subsidized residence home has been only a place for custodial and physical care and in many communities this is still the case. The applicant must qualify according to certain restrictions of residence, health, religion and entrance fees. Sometimes he must sign over whatever income and savings he has.

In recent years it has been discovered that the payment of a reasonable monthly amount is more satisfactory for all persons concerned. Trained social workers have entered the field both as counselors to and as superintendents of homes. Greater understanding is shown toward the needs, desires, and potentialities of the residents of a home. The resident group lives as a family and the place is home, not a home. All are encouraged to be helpful toward each other, to be understanding of the one who forgets, or talks too much. They are urged to take part in many kinds of activities both in and outside the home. They have freedom to go and come as they please; visitors are welcomed anytime. Someone cares about them and they have protection, companionship, and semi-independence.

However, the waiting lists are very long and admission boards are deeply concerned about the numbers who are turned away. A new kind of service has been developed to meet the needs of those who wait - the so-called Non-Resident Service.

e. Non-Resident Aid

The Peabody Home for Aged Women in New York City, concerned over the large number of applicants who must be turned away annually because of space limitations, initiated a program to meet the needs of these frustrated people in 1945. It was found, on investigation, that eighty per cent of these applicants did not, as yet, require the sheltered care of a home. They were lonely, anxious, and feeling helpless in the face of the unsympathetic attitude of the community in which they lived. They needed someone to care about them, someone they could trust. They needed immediate guidance, but not necessarily the care of the Home.

The experiment started with the selection of thirty persons between the ages of sixty-five and eighty who met the admission requirements. Fifteen became residents of the Home; the other fifteen were given full assurance that they would be given immediate help and would be taken into the Home when they could no longer look after themselves. All were of



reasonably good health and were mentally alert, but were insecure. The residents of the Home were relieved of all possible anxieties; each woman had a room of her own, comfort, and nursing care when needed; recreational programs were provided; visitors were welcomed and residents were free to go and come as they wished.

The Non-Residents were equally relieved of anxiety but were left with full responsibility for their own care. Each was visited by the caseworker as often as there was need; each was provided with a telephone and an allowance for carfare; each was encouraged to call for counsel. Some were guided into part-time employment, or recreational activities either in or outside Peabody Home. They were made to feel they belonged to the Home. They did their own marketing, kept house, managed their own affairs. Their activities were normal and healthy. When the time came, as it did, that anyone was too tired to carry on by herself, then she was taken into the Home.

The experiment has continued and become an accepted pattern. In the last analysis, the Non-Resident group has seemed happier, more contented, healthier, and more alert to community and world affairs. They are less concerned about themselves and more interested in others. Furthermore, the cost of providing this service is much, much less than

institutional service; contentment, dignity, and security can be given to at least twice as many older persons by the parent home.<sup>8</sup>

f. The Foster Home Program

Another example of sheltered care of older people is the Foster Home Program of the Jewish Community Services of Long Island. Disturbed by the ever increasing number of older persons making application for entrance into a home, workers in this organization began to ask themselves these questions: "Is a home the only answer? Is it the best answer? Is it what these worried people actually want?"

On investigation, they learned that people prefer living normally as possible in the community. Therefore they set to work and through their many services - counseling, homemaker services, psychiatric services, and financial help of various kinds - initiated a private residence program which would guarantee the kind of help each individual needs. They have high standards for the homes and reasonable qualifications for those whom they help. They have been able to find foster-home care even for the handicapped - the blind, amputees, the senile confused person, and for many persons who have been released from mental institutions.

The program is in its fifth year. In evaluating their

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8. Cf. Ruth Lavery, Non-Resident Aid: A Community Program for the Aged, reprinted from State Government, October, 1952, pp. 1-4.

- experiment they feel it is a feasible and valuable plan both for older persons and the community. Furthermore, they have found that families are willing to care for the aged in their homes if they have continued case work support and proper remuneration. The plan, as yet, has limitations. There is need of finding some way by which the handicapped person can participate in community life. There is also need of close relationship with a home for the aged that those who actually need the care of a home may benefit by it. The challenge is evident to many and there is confidence it will be met.<sup>9</sup>

#### g. The Care of the Chronically Ill

One of the most acute needs of the present day is an adequate program for the care of the chronically ill; the need of an attitude of compassion both for the physically handicapped and mentally confused. Too often troubled families "put away" the aged ill person in a nursing home or public hospital when home care could be provided. Hospitals are over-crowded and good nursing homes are short in supply. The rising cost of hospital and nursing care is generally prohibitive for most people. Moreover the aged person is most eager to stay at home.

Communities are beginning to feel that public and

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9. Cf. "The Private Residence Program of the Jewish Community Services of Long Island", a paper presented at a meeting of the Planning Committee on Jewish Family Services of the Council of Jewish Federation and Welfare Funds held at Chicago, June 1, 1952.

private agencies must initiate programs to lessen the strain for the aged ill and for their families. Health information on nutrition, drugs, understanding of personality problems, the need of periodic health examination, and nursing care is being disseminated by means of the radio, television, newspaper articles, pamphlets and by teaching programs.

The trend toward shortening the period of hospital occupancy has initiated the program of outpatient care through the visiting doctor, clinic facilities, the visiting nurse, the visiting housekeeper, and the friendly visitor.

Rehabilitation programs not only to fit disabled persons for employment, but also to restore hemiplegics and other seemingly hopeless invalids to caring for themselves, have been developed in certain hospitals. The A.D.L. (Aid to Daily Living) program of Goldwater Memorial Hospital in New York City is attracting national attention. Dr. Michael M. Dacso, director of this work, states that almost every patient who receives this training improves; even the aged bedridden patient can at least be rehabilitated to the point where he can sit up in a wheel chair, feed himself, and attend to his own hygienic needs.<sup>10</sup>

There is no one solution for the great task of providing living arrangements for our older citizens. What is needed is the investment, not only of money, but also of sympathetic understanding and of every known skill, to plan the

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10. Cf. New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Problems of the Aging: op. cit., p. 137.

means whereby older citizens may live comfortably and with dignity; with the guarantee of their liberty and the opportunity to contribute their energy and wisdom to the life around them.

## 2. Activity Programs

### a. Occupation

One of the great needs of the aging person, as well as of the younger person, is something to do - the opportunity to exercise himself mentally, physically, and socially, to fill his day with satisfying activity. The very nature of his personality depends on his feeling of adequacy, achievement, and usefulness.

To some, continued employment is the answer and industry is beginning to see the wisdom of employment counseling to help the older workers achieve job adjustment. The progressive-retirement program, the extension-of-retirement program, the promotion to less difficult work and extension of employment time, part time work - all of these plans are being publicized. There is also the sheltered workshop with its rehabilitation and learning program, and its job placement and counseling services.

To others, the answer is "retirement to", not merely "retirement from"; many are the pre-retirement programs which

begin to direct older workers years ahead toward the happy pursuit of a desired avocation. That person on retirement hardly has time to miss what he has left and he finds many ways of filling his days with satisfaction and happiness.

b. The Day Center

Many find themselves with nothing interesting to do; they are lonely, afraid and frustrated. The day center program, which has developed in recent years, recognizes some of the broader needs of the older person. New York City has twelve of these centers sponsored by the Department of Welfare - open from nine to five o'clock five days a week. There are such centers in many other cities in the country.

The Hodson Memorial Center was started in the old Borough Hall Building in the Bronx in 1943. With the help of the local Department of Welfare, the building was renovated and partly furnished. Men and women of varying cultural and ethnic backgrounds over sixty years of age, and for the most part from the low income group, find this Center a stimulating substitute for the normal work-day of their younger years. The membership is in the hundreds; some come every day, some two or three times a week; the average daily attendance is around one hundred and fifty.

The Center has a Board of Directors, composed of

lay and professional people, experienced in work with the aging, to raise funds and interpret the needs of the Center to the community organizations. Trained social workers and special interest teachers make up the staff.

The membership participates in the self-government of as many of the duties and activities as is possible. Committee members and officers are very active. Recreation consists of birthday parties, holiday celebrations, outings and picnics, movies, lectures with discussion periods, dancing, games, and the daily refreshment hour in mid-afternoon.

There are qualified leaders for special interests groups - poetry, English, dramatics, music, art, sewing, crafts and other activities as desired. There is a library, an orchestra and a glee club; an editorial board which edits "The Hodson Quarterly" containing contributions by many of the members; an annual bazaar for which members supply things they have made to make money for the center. Paintings, created by the art members, cover the walls. They are happy, active people belonging to a group they call their own.

Beyond all this is the staff, accessible to anyone in need of personal counseling on medical needs, budgeting, Old Age Assistance; in need of having a letter written; in need of referral to more expert counsel.

A place to come, knowing that some one will care

and that there will be something interesting to do, fills a great need. Their spontaneous expressions that the place is a haven, a blessing, and that before they found it they were just waiting to die, are proof of the Center's value.<sup>11</sup>

c. The Golden Age Clubs

Most valuable in the non-commercial recreation field are the so-called Golden Age Clubs, sponsored by business and professional clubs; by welfare organizations; by churches and synagogues. The National Jewish Welfare Board has at least eighty-two day centers or clubs for older adults in the nation. The National Council of Jewish Women does outstanding work supporting these programs materially, and with the training of volunteer workers, who assist the trained social worker in charge of the center or club. Most clubs are open to all older people; a few have been formed with cultural and professional interests in mind. They hold meetings usually once a week, some in the afternoon, some in the evening, play games and have refreshments. A social committee visits those who become ill, writes letters, and sends birthday cards to the members.

The writer played chess at one of these clubs with an elderly Yale graduate, so deaf that he could not hear, but who found joy answering questions which were written for him to read. A Red Cross worker brings him, along with others, wearing

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11. Cf. Lillian E. Riegelman: The Fifth Annual Report issued by the Board of Directors of the William Hodson Center, 1943-1948.



large felt slippers, for his poor circulation prevents his wearing shoes. He comes every week carrying his chess game under his arm and someone is ready to play with him.\*

d. Education

The Retired Business and Professional Men's Club at a local Y.M.C.A., with some two hundred members of varied vocations, has an average weekly attendance of a hundred. They meet every Tuesday morning at ten-thirty o'clock for a short business meeting with reports from the visiting committee, the planning committee and other committees. Their program consists of a movie or a talk by one of their able members or an interested outside speaker. There is a discussion period afterwards. At one o'clock they move to a nearby hotel for luncheon and good fellowship. Some stay on into the afternoon and play games in the hotel lobby.\*

Adult Education programs in various interesting fields, suited to the tastes of older adults are growing more and more popular. Now New York State provides leadership training in recreation, and instructors for centers and classes. There are also available excellent outlines of courses of study for older adults. Among the courses, in adult education are travelogues, philosophy, problems of later maturity, gardening, arts and crafts.

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\* Personal visits.

e. The Hobby Show

The hobby show, in various communities, has been planned to appeal to older people in every walk of life. The exhibits help also to focus the attention of the public on the abilities and the value of the senior citizens.

The Annual Hobby Show for Older Persons, which is held in May of each year at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, is in its seventh year. The exhibit is open to the public for ten days with an educational program and entertainment each afternoon. To the exhibitors it is "Old Home Week" where they meet old friends and are warmed by other's interest in what they have created. To the visitor it is the opportunity for finding out what agency programs are doing for older persons. To the social worker it is a tool for interpreting and encouraging the capacities of older people in the community.

Something to do, someone with whom to share his creative interest or his thoughts, someone to appreciate what he does and what he is - these are the things that make the difference between boredom and enthusiasm.

3. Counseling Services

Another service which is being instituted in community programs is personal counseling - the services of the

trained case worker who becomes "the one who cares" to those bewildered lonely persons who have no one who understands their needs. Even though people prefer to remain in their own home as long as possible, the most frequent request made to agencies serving them is assistance to enter a home, because there seems to be no alternative. What lay people do not know about the solution to the problems of aging and about existing agencies to help them is astounding. Many do not even know about golden age clubs, helpful publications, education programs, Old Age Assistance and visiting services from the Welfare Center. It is small wonder that anxious older people, living alone or in poor adjustment with relatives, become so frustrated and so helpless.

The trained social worker knows what the community resources are, how to interpret them and how to use them; knows how to accept the older individual as a person and to approach his problem realistically yet sympathetically from his point of view. The counselor has the skill with which to lead troubled older persons to search out the causes of their anxiety and to see how they can help themselves in cooperation with the counselor and their relatives or friends to find a better solution.

The ever increasing number of requests for admission to a home and the realization that hundreds of older people

--must be turned away every year, lost and discouraged, and the feeling that they had many other basic needs, provided the impetus for the development of the counseling services. Day centers, industry, churches, homes for the aged, and welfare agencies are making provision for counseling and casework service; some can afford only a part time worker; agencies combine and one caseworker may serve several.

The trained social worker is valuable both to the older individual and to the community. She knows how to determine whether the aged person needs more expert help and how to make the referral; she is the constant source of help to those who are waiting for needed shelter in the Home; she helps the semi-independent continue to live in the community, safely, comfortably, and usefully. Moreover, she learns that a great number of those who apply for entrance to a home neither actually desire it or need it. In addition to this, her office is the source of information and training for the many and much needed volunteers who may be selected to assist in various community activities.

#### D. Summary

It was learned, during the depression years of the 1930's that the problems of aged people were becoming a matter of national concern. The Social Security Act with its old-age

insurance and old-age assistance benefits was passed in 1935. However, it was soon discovered that many other problems needed immediate consideration. Interested people realized there was almost no information about the problems of the aging available and that considerable study must be made before constructive action could take place.

What was learned through study and experiment and how ideas were shared and recommendations were made in institutes and conferences is discussed in the first section of the chapter. Most important among the conferences is the first National Conference on Aging, held in Washington in 1950. The rising tide of interest expressed in a veritable flood of publications has been almost overwhelming.

The second section of the chapter deals with patterns of action which have been developed to meet three basic needs of older adults - "somewhere to live, something to do, someone to care". It has been learned that older adults prefer to and, in most cases, can, with the help of relatives and community agencies, continue to live at least semi-independently with safety and comfort in the community. Therefore, many patterns of living arrangements have been developed. Among these are the cottage colony, companion apartments, resident homes, non-resident aid and programs for care of the ill.

Rehabilitation services for the handicapped, and visiting nurse and housekeeper services are available in certain areas.

The second part of this section on patterns of actions stresses the need of "something to do" and the development of community activities - sheltered workshops and job counseling; day centers with recreation and education programs; golden age clubs and adult education facilities; the interest and values in the Annual Hobby Show.

Lastly some discussion is given to the need, the value, and the development of counseling service for older people and their relatives and concerned friends. This service maintains central intake service for homes; referral of older persons to more expert aid when needed; personal counseling on finances, opportunities for fellowship and activity in the community; information on the various community welfare services and provision for leadership training of volunteers to assist trained leaders in community welfare projects. This service tends to provide "someone to care".

CHAPTER III

THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH TO THE PROBLEMS  
AND NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS

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THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH TO THE PROBLEMS  
AND NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS

A. Introduction

The problems that confront persons in their later years and the response that has been made by society toward solving these problems have been discussed in the preceding chapters. It has been shown that in solving any such problem much depends on the inner resources which the aging individual can contribute to the help provided by society.

The Christian Church, more than any other agency, has unique resources in the teaching of Christ for ministering to all of life's needs. That person who has achieved the joy of Christian experience in sharing the gift of God's abiding love; who has found in the study of God's Word guidance for daily living; who has become so close to God in his prayer life that he feels he has always a companion with whom to commune, and who has learned how to accept and work out his problems against the background of God's eternal plan - that person has found the perspective by



which he will be prepared spiritually, mentally and physically for the responsibilities of later life. With advancing years however, he will need to continue his spiritual growth in Christian fellowship together with participation in the ongoing work of the church.

In the early 1940's churches began to realize that there was need of more intelligent action in the religious ministry of the church in relation to the needs of their older people. The fact that there was so little information available on the religious approach to the needs of older people and that little had been done except in the way of church homes for the aged concerned interested persons deeply. They decided there was need of considerable study and exchange of ideas before they could plan wisely.

It will be the purpose of this chapter to show the response of the Protestant churches. The first part of the chapter will set forth the growing interest which has been expressed in their research and experiments, and in their conferences and publications. The second part will be devoted to programs which are being promoted here and there as the result of the constructive thinking of religious leaders in their ministry to older people. The

programs will be limited to four basic needs, the meeting of which is the responsibility of the church - their need for continuing growth in the direction of a better relationship with God and their fellowmen, for fellowship and participation in the activities of the church, for pastoral counseling and social services, and for sheltered care under Christian auspices.

### B. The Growing Interest of the Church

#### 1. Research

It was in the early forties that the first comprehensive attempt to study the relationship of the Protestant churches to people over sixty years of age was planned. The plan for this study came originally from Seward Hiltner, executive secretary of the Department of Pastoral Services of The Federal Council of The Churches of Christ in America. The Methodist Church at this same time was considering a study of group work with older people in local churches. The two projects were merged and funds were provided through a sizable grant from the Arbuckle-Jamison Foundation of Pittsburgh and from special funds of the Methodist Church. In 1946 The Federal Council

engaged the services of Paul Benjamin Maves and J. Lennart Cedarleaf to make a two-year study of the religious ministry of the church to older people. Their project included research on the problems of the aging and studies of the programs for older people in several representative Methodist churches. The Maves and Cedarleaf publications became the basic resource for pastors and other professional leaders.<sup>1</sup>

In 1948 the Protestant Council of New York City authorized David W. Barry, of the Pathfinding Service for the Churches, to make a survey of "The Protestant Churches and the Aged" in New York City. It was discovered that many of the churches had not realized the needs of their older people. This study provided information on programs to meet the needs.

## 2. Experimental Programs

As early as 1945 the Methodist Church began a series of institutes for older adults in various parts of the country. The first of these was held in Waycross, Georgia, in April of that year. This type of conference covers four days, parts of the first and fourth days given over to traveling. The program consists of worship, discussion forums on topics of interest, fellowship and recreation, rest and relaxation. There has also been a

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1. Cf. Paul Benjamin Maves and J. Lennart Cedarleaf: Older People and the Church, p. 7.

series of district and subdistrict one-day meetings for older adults.

In the local churches new attitudes toward the potentialities of older people were developing. Concerted efforts were being made to make use of their wisdom and skills in the volunteer work of the church. Recreation programs, golden age clubs, special interest activities were being sponsored. Closer participation of "shut-ins" in the prayer life and in the mission study of the church was urged. Interested persons endeavored to find out why so many older people did not come to church - whether it was a matter of transportation, health or a feeling of being "shut out". The Friendly Visiting program in many places had regular and frequent visits made to the elderly shut-ins, thus giving them a real anchor to cling to in their loneliness.

Conferences for workers with older adults were being held throughout the states. The first attempt to bring a selected group together for exploration and training in work related to older adults in The Methodist Church was made at the conference in Nashville, Tennessee, in April, 1950. Ideas on various fields of work with the aging were discussed. The group declared that the church should help older adults to feel worthwhile, to hold up their heads with

dignity and to realize that they are wanted and needed. Concrete examples of how this is being done in certain churches were exchanged.

### 3. The National Conference on Aging

When the Federal Security Administrator announced a National Conference on Aging, leaders in the churches and synagogues accepted the invitation to participate in the discussion-forum on "Religious Programs and Services". They limited their discussions to the following topics: the objectives and resources of churches and synagogues in relation to aging persons; methods of changing attitudes and action patterns; group living under religious auspices. They emphasized their belief that God sees every human being, regardless of his age, as a person of value and of worth; that family responsibility consists not only of parents' care of their children, but in turn, of children's care of their parents; that each person is in God's plan his brother's keeper.<sup>2</sup>

### 4. Publications

Bibliographies of books and pamphlets in the field of the aging are now available. Important among these are Man and His Years, which contains the group report on

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2. Cf. Federal Security Agency, Man and His Years, pp. 205-209.

"Religious Programs and Services."

The Christian Religious Education of Older People by Paul Benjamin Maves and Older People and the Church by Maves and J. Lennart Cedarleaf represent the findings of their two-year study of the religious ministry of the church.

The writer has found publications of the Methodist Church most helpful. Their "Home Quarterly", geared to the interests of older persons, their report of "Training Conferences for Selected Workers with Older Adults" and "Planning Your Older Adult Conference" have programs of interest for all churches.

Churches and synagogues are beginning to be concerned about the problems of their older members and interest in new programs to meet their needs is being shown.

G. Programs of Religious Ministry

1. Continuing Spiritual Growth

a. Relationship with God

The church, concerned as it is with the whole life of her people and with the development of a person's total personality, has a specific responsibility to minister to every age group. As Maves has so aptly expressed it in his program for the aged:

"From the Christian point of view older people also are children of God. The gospel makes no distinction between age groups. It calls upon us to foster the continuous growth of persons in the direction of a better relationship with God. . . Older people need guidance in discharging the continuing stewardship of the talents that are given to them, and in continuing to walk humbly before their God in the way that leads to life eternal."<sup>3</sup>

The Christian faith, more than anything else, has the basic source for teaching older people how to understand the meaning of life, how to accept losses, how to solve problems, how to find the compensations of later maturity. This involves personal commitment to Christ in whom was revealed the character and the will of God, and everlasting trust in His abounding care.

How this faith may be communicated to and attained by older people who do not have it, and how it may be retained by those who have it, is the fundamental concern of the church ministry. It is the church which sets forth the goals and values of life. It seeks to know what God is like and what His plan is, that man may have understanding faith, rely on God's guidance and do His will. From the church comes the interpretation of the life, the work and the teaching of Christ, the art and the power of prayer, and the encouragement to use devotional materials.

People in their later years quite naturally turn

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3. Naves, op. cit., p. 29.

to the church and to the experience of corporate worship in its sanctuary. Whatever is done warmly to help these people feel wanted and accepted will contribute to their ability to join in the worship service in spirit and in truth. The sincere welcome at the door, the matter of being ushered kindly to a place where they can see and hear, the friendly smile and small courtesies of those with whom they share the pew, are needed. The inspiration from the beauty and simplicity of the sanctuary, the glorious peal of the organ, the entry of the singing choir, help to set the tone for relaxed serenity in many a troubled heart. The voice of the beloved pastor, who is sensitive to every need, reaches the problem in every heart. Heads bowed and reverently praying together, they sense a world-wide Christian fellowship, a feeling of comfort that so many are asking God to help, not alone themselves, but all others.

The pastor in his sermon, if he is alert to their needs, imbues them with confidence for living, leading them to appreciate that all have problems, that all find in the love of God and in love for each other, the same source of power to help solve their problems. The minister's interpretation of the Bible and direction for practice of daily



Christian living shape the attitude of the whole congregation before they leave the sanctuary. The responsibility that falls on the pastor for that kind of service calls forth his constant reliance on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. His people know how to walk with God.

b. Relationship with Himself

"The major problems of later maturity arise out of reactions to excessive thwarting of personality by certain cultural patterns. The chief strengths and compensations of later maturity are to be found in the realm of spiritual attitudes."<sup>4</sup>

By this, Maves means that the ability to face the problems of later maturity depends on the inner spiritual power which the aging person has developed by his relationship with God and with himself.

The Christian church has the resources, which society does not use, for developing a mature, creative personality which is of value in handling life's problems. It is the privilege of the church to teach the love of Christ and the higher law of love which He practiced.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," Jesus said, and "Thou shalt love one another." Loving God means putting God first and being ever in communion with Him; loving one another means reaching out to do His will, not turning in - to block one's mind with his

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4. Ibid., p. 72.

own hurts. Jesus taught his people how to find inner strength, how to pray, how to be ever receptive to God's guiding counsel, and how to receive the gift of the power of the Holy Spirit. Maves says:

"The church helps persons to develop an inner security which makes it possible to face problems, to recognize their own involvement in such problems, and to acquire the ability to accept the consequences of their own decisions."<sup>5</sup>

That person who, from his early years, has learned by following the law of the love of Christ how to handle conflict has the same ability in his later years. He knows how to divert his loneliness into thoughtfulness for others; how to change his fear and insecurity into new strength from God; how to turn his frustration, which comes from the unsympathetic attitude of society, into creative interests and service for others.

His inner security comes from the assurance that God loves him and respects him as a person, from his feeling of self-confidence that God gives him the resources of power that he needs. He has worked through his faith in Christ for the compensations that come - the wisdom of understanding why others do as they do, the joy of deepening faith and nearness to God, and the serenity of inner peace in communion with God.

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5. Ibid., p. 78.

However, the commandment, "Thou shalt love one another" demands a kindly response from those who lack understanding of the rights and potentialities of older persons. The church, by its teaching of the love of Christ, has the responsibility of initiating or lending its support to programs which will alleviate the problems of later maturity. What the church thinks and does - on changing the negative attitudes of society toward the aging, on developing opportunities for employment, recreation, adequate financial support, and for medical and nursing care of older people - is of momentous importance. As Maves says:

"The church is the channel of grace through which flows the love of God. And nowhere is this more apparent than in relation to older people."<sup>6</sup>

c. Relationship with His Fellowmen

Growing in grace and shaping his personality growth by his practice of the higher law of love and his loyalty to Christ sets the tone for the older person's relationship with his fellowmen. The gospel directs him to count his blessings and to use his talents that he may be a blessing, not a burden, to those about him. Before him lies the opportunity of silent testimony to the value of his commitment to Christ and of the presence of God in his life. He has the occasion, again and again, of interpreting by way of his attitudes the

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6. Ibid., p. 81.

meaning of life, the meaning of the "Ten Commandments" and "The Sermon on the Mount". He possesses a great means of assisting others from the wisdom of his years of experience. The stewardship of his kindly interest in others - his quiet attention to their problems, his thoughtful approval and encouragement of them, his understanding respect for their right and ability to make decisions that are different from his own - is a service of value.

His interest can be centered also in the missionary outreach of the church; in civic and national programs for the betterment of others; in educational programs which are training the younger generation to take its place in the work of God's world. He can find many fields of usefulness in which he may use his leisure time. There is the practice of intercessory prayer and of using devotional materials like the "Upper Room" and the "Yearbook of Prayer" in company with countless others throughout the world. The work of God's Kingdom in this way is strengthened.

Moreover, if the older person is to find opportunity for more active participation in the ongoing work of the church, he must depend to some extent on the response of the church. The church, in its teaching of the gospel, has provided the means by which the Christian learns to walk with God, acquires

the inner security and confidence within himself for handling his problems, and is shown the pattern for practicing Christian living in his relationship with his fellowmen.

The church has become aware of the great need of the older person to be accepted in the great church family. Furthermore the church is beginning to include older persons in the planning of its activities.

## 2. Fellowship Activities

### a. Planning Fellowship Activities

One of the great needs in later maturity is the opportunity for fellowship through participation in the activities of the family, the church, and the community. Loss of friends and relatives, caused by death or change of residence, brings the problem of loneliness and the task of finding new friends. However, older people are shy and need the friendly interest of someone who will call them forth. They need to feel accepted and wanted by the group, and to be useful in some form of group activity. Whatever the church can do to help older people join with the entire family of the church in corporate worship, to include them in the prayers and in the message that is preached, and to offer facilities whereby they can hear and see more easily, is the first step in the church program for older people.

The church possesses the physical facilities which can be used in programs for all groups, especially for the service of the aged. Church workers are seeing their privilege and, as they turn their attention toward the needs of older people, they are finding ways of including them in the work of the church.

1.      b. Group Activities in the Church

The local church<sup>\*</sup> planned a series of Bible studies by the pastor for the midweek service, a different group in the church sponsoring the service each week with two duties - to bring to the meeting as many people as possible and to be hostess at the social hour following the meeting. Older people especially enjoy singing the familiar songs and the informal, friendly manner in which the pastor develops the day's message to meet their needs. They enjoy the warm spirit of the social hour and the first, and sometimes second, plate of ice cream in company with friendly people.

The Woman's Bible Class, which meets in a beautiful colonial room on the first floor where there are no stairs to climb, and ten minutes later than the other classes to avoid the busy traffic of young children in the halls, includes in its membership those in their middle years and upward. They have their own officers, their projects, their

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\* First Presbyterian Church, Orange, New Jersey.

social meeting twice a year, and their own course of study. They leave a little later than the others, both inspired by the message of the teacher they love and warmed by the friendly contacts they have had.

The Men's Bible Class, under a similar plan, meets in the chapel and is inspired by the message of the leader whom they so greatly admire. They have a social meeting several times a year with a speaker on such subjects as "How to Retire and Like It", "Pre-retirement Planning", or "Values That Endure". They include in their projects interest in helping younger people who are preparing for religious work, the purchase of a loud speaker for the auditorium, and participation in the visiting services of the church.

The Woman's Association ministers to all age-groups, their officers and committee members, old and young, changing every two years. Kindly-minded persons make an effort to transport older members, especially to the monthly luncheon meeting. Warm appreciation of contributions, however small, lead all members to feel they are sharing in the great missionary outreach of the church. A little old lady of eighty is still sending birthday cards to the members; another writes friendly letters to the missionaries and boys

in service; the chairman of the hostess committee, who is seventy-six, looks forward to baking the birthday cake which will serve a hundred at the one-hundred-and-thirty-fifth birthday celebration of the Association.

Family nights with dessert and coffee at seven o'clock and a program dealing with the Missionary Outreach of the church provides an occasion for the whole church family to eat together, to sing together, to think of others together.

#### c. Group Activities for Older-Age Groups

Certain churches make a special effort to plan clubs for those who are sixty years of age or older. Broadway Tabernacle in New York City, has had a Monday Evening Recreation Club with an average attendance of seventy for seven years. The club is church-sponsored but open to the older people in the area. The program includes fun, refreshments, educational programs and opportunity for friendly intercourse. Counsel, as to finding needed services in social welfare, is available.

Some churches provide the physical facilities for a golden age club under outside supervision.

A Florida church has a monthly service early on Sunday morning for older people. They come in wheel-chairs and leaning on canes or crutches, transported by interested



members. Churches elsewhere hold similar meetings on a Sunday afternoon with a program of special interest to the problems of older people.

Special attention is sometimes given to older adults in the morning service. A pastor invites his older members to send him ideas on what religion means to them. Then he preaches a sermon on these ideas and gives special recognition to those who have been members of the church thirty, forty and fifty years or more.

Then there are the conferences and camp meetings for older people-"Old Home Week". The program and the facilities are planned to meet their particular needs. Worship and inspiration, forum discussions, recreation and fun, handicrafts, rest and relaxation are the aims of the program.

The church also has many occasions to invite older people for useful volunteer service in the sewing group, in the work of the telephone squad, the sending out of church bulletins and special notices, the care of the flowers, and in the many visiting services to the shut-ins of the church community.

Churches are learning more and more how to find and encourage the older people to come into the activities

of the church and how to make them feel useful and wanted. The church is also extending its services to shut-ins and to those who need many kinds of pastoral care.

### 3. A Program of Pastoral Care

That pastor who sees his full responsibility to the older people of his church not only ministers to them through group relationships, but he also endeavors to be the good shepherd to his shut-ins and to those members who have a special need. They, too, wish to feel that they belong and are wanted. The writer of this thesis will present three types of pastoral care in a pastor's program - the shut-ins who need only encouragement and assurance of help in time of need; the insecure person who needs understanding love and spiritual help; the distressed person who needs guidance toward finding external help;

The shut-in who has learned how to handle his problems before, and how to maintain good relationships with many people, needs perhaps only the casual friendly visit from the pastor to encourage him. This friendly relationship before his problems become critical may be enough to develop the mutual understanding that the parishioner may count on the pastor's immediate response, if a crisis comes.

This shut-in will enjoy the fellowship of the friendly lay visitor who comes regularly as a representative of the pastor. The visitor may bring the church bulletin, the home Bible-study lesson plan, the "Year-book of Prayer", or the "Upper Room", and stay long enough to talk about the church activities and interesting things to read. If the shut-in is blind, the visitor may read aloud or find someone to help with teaching the Braille method. She may suggest good programs on the radio. If the person is deaf, the visitor may be one who can assist with lip reading. The United Lutheran Church aims to have in each large community or geographical area at least one pastor with sufficient training to minister more ably to the blind and the deaf in his area.<sup>7</sup> This type of shut-in is receptive to pastoral care from his church and looks forward to the visits from the church fellowship.

On the other hand, the insecure person who has not learned how to give and take, nor how to be creative about his activities, and has avoided close relationships outside the family group, may be unable to solve his problems alone. Take, for example, the woman who has never felt inner security and who is now suffering a series of crises - the loss of her husband, the selling of her home,

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7. Ibid., p. 216.

the unsympathetic attitude of her son's wife, and entry into a Home. She is apt to be confused and depressed, and to feel rejected and worthless. She may even feel hostile and not receptive to counsel at all. The way must be patiently won by the counselor. She has probably had these negative feelings all her life in a much lesser degree, but has kept them covered by defense attitudes and activity. As Cedarleaf states it:

"Actually it is an instance of later maturity forcing the consolidation of the major patterns or trends that have existed in the person all along."<sup>8</sup>

This discouraged person needs someone to help lift her out of her confusion. It is very important that the pastor or lay visitor shall have the right approach characterized by "understanding-love." By this Cedarleaf means "Alertness to the real feelings the individual expresses even though the feelings may be disguised."<sup>9</sup> It means also the willingness to listen kindly to her as she expresses her negative feelings and never showing impatience or lack of interest in her difficulties; it means the awareness of her potential strength to change her negative attitude. With his patient acceptance of her slowness to be creative and with his understanding-love the pastor guides his parishioner to the point where she faces her inner self

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8. Maves and Cedarleaf, op. cit., p. 89.

9. Ibid., p. 103.

and understands her real feelings. She is now receptive and follows him as he leads her in prayer into the presence of God. God's grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit fill her with an inner power and deeper resources to handle her problems than she has ever known. God has been working through the pastor - parishioner relationship, and the way to inner confidence with Him has been found.<sup>10</sup>

Sometimes the older person needs external help - financial assistance, a change in living arrangements, medical assistance, psychiatric help. The pastor realizes he is not an expert in these situations. He has learned of all the resources in his community to which he may refer; he realizes that most older people are happier living in the community as long as they can and that a Home is not always the best answer. He becomes the interpreter of the social agencies outside of the church which God has made possible and the parishioner's right to use them. He helps him and his family to understand the value of the counseling and referral service of the trained social worker and makes the right contact between them. He assures the parishioner that he and the church are with him in spirit and are ready to help him whenever he needs them. The older person has now the basic support that he needs, to accept external help.<sup>11</sup>

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10. Ibid., pp. 94-105.

11. Ibid., p. 135.

In order that the pastor, with all his other duties, may find the time to minister to the complex problems of his older people, he will see the need of planning a schedule and of keeping a record of each person in his pastoral care for his particular use. He will find it necessary to continue giving assurance to those whom he has helped, but on the other hand, to limit most of his calls to those who are struggling toward creativity in handling their problems. He can train his best lay visitors to continue with the "understanding-love" and patience that he has used and to go in his place wherever possible, at the same time explaining to his parishioner why.<sup>12</sup> If the parishioner senses that the pastor is supporting him through his thoughts and his prayers and that he will come to him when his need is great, he will welcome the lay visitor who comes in his place and feel that the fellowship of those who love Christ is with him in all his needs. In the final analysis the older person through the pastoral care of the church feels that God's agents are with him and that they care what happens to him.

#### 4. Sheltered Care Under Christian Auspices

Many older persons, even though they wish to live

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12. Ibid., pp. 145-150.

independently in the community come to the time when they prefer or need sheltered care away from the strains of the younger generation. They turn first to their church. It is the churches which have the largest number of homes where older people can find "home" in the fullest sense and something more than custodial care. According to the report of the First National Conference on Aging, there were in 1950 some 800 to 900 homes under the churches and synagogues serving around 60,000 persons.<sup>13</sup> However, the frustration of increased numbers who must be turned away because of lack of room has led to the initiation of a new program in the churches - the counseling service of the trained social worker in order that the "intake", and "interim period" may more ably and more sympathetically be handled. For example, the Episcopal Diocese of New York has had the full-time service of a trained social worker to conduct the Information, Counseling and Referral services for the aged persons of the Metropolitan Diocese. The director assists in finding non-resident care and nursing homes for those who may be waiting, as long as five years, for an opening in one of the Episcopal homes. She also assists churches with recreational programs for the aging.\* The Lutheran Church in Philadelphia instituted a

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13. Federal Security Agency: op. cit., p. 215.

\* Personal conference at the Cathedral of St. John The Divine.

Non-Resident program in connection with the Lutheran Home for the Aged in Germantown in January, 1952. Some churches combine with others to find these services. The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, Inc., in New York City, serves thirty-six agencies that operate forty-three different programs for the aging - homes for the aged, homes for the aged blind, casework, vocational training and other services. The caseworkers are discovering that about half of the applicants for admission to a home need a different solution to their problems and can, with guidance, be happier in the community. \*

New trends of supervisory care have developed in church homes in recent years - something more than custodial and nursing care. Everything possible is done to create the feeling that the place is "home", that all belong to the "family", and that all have a part in planning the activities which they can enjoy. Efforts are being made in the newer homes to provide single rooms to insure privacy, and applicants are encouraged to bring some of their most prized possessions. They are urged to continue interest in the activities of their church and of the community. They are free to go and come as they please and to have their friends visit them.

The former restrictions as to church affiliation,

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\* Personal conference at the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, Inc.



residence in the area, and methods of payment are changing in many homes. Some homes still require these restrictions and a life-interest payment and the signing over to the Home of the applicant's funds in return for life care.

Certain other church homes open their doors to the members of other denominations and require an adequate monthly payment to cover minimum expenses. Old Age Assistance benefits and private pension plans make this possible and both parties are better satisfied. A third type of home, like the spacious beautiful Pacific Home in Los Angeles, California, under the supervision of the Methodist Church on a non-profit self-supporting basis, shelters some four hundred people of different denominations on a life-membership basis. It could possibly be called a "Club for Older People". Its advantages and privileges are available to all individuals of good character who would be at home in a Christian atmosphere. The price of Life-Membership is governed by the age of the applicant and the room selected, and varies from about \$5,400 at the age of eighty to \$10,000 and up at the age of sixty-five. Members are given every possible kind of service that retired people need and are free to use the balance of their funds as they wish.\*

Churches throughout the nation are concerned about homes for their older people. In a community, for example,

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\* Personal letters from friends in the Pacific home at Los Angeles, California.

there is the large house, bequeathed by a church-member to the church, to be used as a home for twelve refined older women. The beautiful chapel for a religious service, the attractive comfortable living room for group activity and for companionship, the long table in the dining room where they enjoy well-prepared meals together, comfortable warm rooms on the second floor, the spacious screened porch in summer and a beautiful garden, and a most understanding and pleasant director - all this means "home" to twelve women of different denominations, who are seventy years of age and over. The Home is close to transportation, to churches, the bank, the Post Office and a shopping center. Members are free to come and go and to entertain their friends. This type of home would be possible for the churches of any community.\*

The new large six-story brick building of the Methodist Church at Ocean Grove provides for some two hundred people. In a home like this much more can be provided in the way of medical and nursing care, and in recreation programs. Most of the rooms are single, attractively furnished, and enjoyed by those who live there. One floor is assigned to those who need special assistance or nursing care. On each floor there is a small kitchen where members of the great family may prepare a snack and do

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\* Personal observation at the House of the Holy Comforter, West Orange, New Jersey.

personal laundry or pressing whenever they wish. Elevator service makes it possible for all but the handicapped to enjoy the various group activities-- meals together at small tables in the main diningroom; friendly companionship in the spacious lounge on the main floor, in the sun parlor on each floor, or on the sundeck on the roof, where one can look out over the ocean. A large auditorium on the main floor is adapted to various uses - the weekly Wednesday afternoon worship service, the broadcast of the Sunday morning service from the local church, the entertainment given by members of the "Home" family or by outside talent, motion pictures and forum discussions. The Home has a gift shop constantly being filled with things which busy hands and sewing machines provide. In 1952, more than 1600 dollars was made by the family for new projects in the Home.\*

The church home is the source of hope and "home" to many of the members of church organizations. The supply is still inadequate for the great numbers wishing admission. The challenge to provide more homes and extra-institution care in the "interim" period is a matter of concern to many churches. They are meeting the challenge and are planning the building of new homes.

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\* Personal visit to the Methodist Home for the Aged of New Jersey at Ocean Grove, New Jersey.

#### D. Summary

The growing interest of the church in the problems of the aging in the 1940's resulted in considerable study and experiment. The Maves and Cedarleaf publications, which followed their two-year study of the religious ministry to older people in 1946-1948, became the basic resource to pastors and other professional workers in the churches. The delegates at the First National Conference on Aging in 1950, having exchanged ideas, emphasized their belief that God sees every human being as a person of value; that in God's plan everyone is his brother's keeper; that it is the responsibility of the church to foster continuing spiritual growth in the life of its older people.

In the second part of the chapter the writer pointed out that the Christian faith enables the individual through his commitment to Christ to learn the way of walking with God; the way to acquire inner resources to meet his needs creatively; the way to grow in grace and to practice the higher law of love toward his fellow men.

Churches, more and more, are planning programs to include older people as belonging to the church family in the corporate worship services and fellowship activities of the church. Pastors and lay visitors are seeking to help

shut-ins, the insecure, and the anxious older persons with patient understanding-love to find ways to solve their problems. New trends of thought for the welfare of older people are being expressed in the counseling service of the trained social worker and in the sheltered care within church homes.

CHAPTER IV  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### A. Summary

The constantly growing number of people over sixty-five years of age with a possible life expectancy of thirteen years has been steadily recognized as a major problem in the last fifteen years. Older people suffer shocks from forced retirement, lowered income, poor housing, inadequate medical and nursing care, and emotional conflicts because of the unsympathetic attitude of society toward their rights and usefulness. Too often our youth-centered society sets them aside or puts them away in a home, or even in a mental institution when with help they could live normally in the community. Older people need to be loved, wanted, to be thought competent, and to be given the chance to live a useful life. They, themselves, need inner resources to face their problems and to think creatively how to solve them. However, it is necessary for society to have a positive attitude and to provide facilities that the aging may live happily in their later years.

In the second chapter the writer of this thesis pointed out the growing interest of society in study and

experiment until there is a veritable flood of publications in the field of aging at the present day. The 816 delegates at the first National Conference on Aging in 1950, exchanged ideas and shaped the objectives for community planning. New experiments are constantly being tried - better housing of various types geared to the needs of older people; more intelligent and compassionate care of the chronically ill; programs of education and recreation in clubs, day centers, in adult schools and churches; part time employment and job counseling; counseling services on non-resident aid, foster homes, and admission to homes; new trends of thought in the supervisory care of older people in homes - all of these efforts are being made in the response of society, together with the constant effort to educate the public toward a more constructive attitude in its relationship to older people.

It was discovered that the Christian churches had a specific ministry in the teaching of Christ to enable the individual person to acquire the inner resources which are necessary for facing later maturity creatively. The research, and the experimental programs to foster spiritual growth of older persons through participation in the corporate worship services and fellowship activities of the church; the practice of understanding-love in the pastoral counseling to shut-ins and to those in special need; the



guiding of anxious older persons toward accepting the services of the trained social worker; the new trends in sheltered care under religious auspices - these are the outstanding areas in which the church has responded.

#### B. Conclusion

Older people need to love others and to be loved by them in turn. Christ said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; thou shalt love one another." The practice of those instructions is the key to the solution not only of the problems of later maturity, but of one's whole life.

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Hickey, Margaret: Better Living for Older People, Ladies Home Journal, April, 1951.

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2. Chicago, April 17-19, 1951.
3. Planning Your Older Adult Conference - prepared by Virginia Stafford, 1951.
4. District Pastor's Seminars in the interest of the Local Church's Work with Older Adults in the Michigan Conference, December 4-8, 1950.
5. Home Quarterly, a Methodist Magazine for Older People.

#### D. Personal Contacts

##### Clubs and Day Centers

"L" Club, Montclair, New Jersey.

Happy Hour Clubs, Orange, East Orange, West Orange, New Jersey.

Retired Business and Professional Men's Club  
Orange, New Jersey.

William Sirovich Day Center  
New York City.

##### Homes

House of the Holy Comforter (Episcopal)  
West Orange, New Jersey.

Presbyterian Home for the Aged  
Belvidere, New Jersey.

Methodist Home for the Aged  
Ocean Grove, New Jersey.

Mary Manning Walsh Home (Catholic)  
New York City.

Pacific Home (Methodist)  
Los Angeles, California.

##### Social Services

Miss Elizabeth Evans  
Executive Director  
Episcopal Service to the Aged  
Diocese of New York

Mrs. Ruth Lavery  
Field Director of Peabody Home  
New York City.

Mrs. Jean Wallace Carey  
Director, Division on Aging  
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies  
New York City.

Mr. George Murray  
Group Consultant  
Board of Catholic Charities  
New York City.