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### Rekindling Your Spiritual Life at Age 65 and Beyond

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REKINDLING YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

AT AGE 65 AND BEYOND

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MARCH 1994

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CONCORDIA SEMINARY

REKINDLING YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE  
AT AGE 65 AND BEYOND

A MAJOR APPLIED PROJECT  
SUBMITTED TO CONCORDIA SEMINARY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

DENNIS W. PEGORSCH

PLYMOUTH, WISCONSIN

MARCH 1994

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To Mr. Robert Herrmann and my wife Grace Pegorsch who served as readers for this paper.

## PREFACE

There is a threefold purpose for this Major Applied Project paper. The first purpose is to fulfill the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry program at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. The second purpose focuses on Christian education and faith development for older adults as a life-long process from the cradle-to-the-grave. This process is vital to help people move from one stage of life to another with a meaningful and purposeful self-identity. The final purpose is to help me and other parish pastors to be more effective in communicating the Word of God and promoting active discipleship among older adults by providing a workable and productive model of ministry by, with, to, and for older adults within our congregation and communities.

There is an urgent need to focus on the changing needs of people. Demographically our nation has moved from a youth-oriented society to an aging society. Both ends of the spectrum have needs which must be addressed by the church. Either the Christian Church in America will reach out and challenge people of all ages to grow in their spiritual life or the church will continue to decline, relying on the successes of the past.

The concern for Christian education as a lifelong process is vital to the spiritual life and growth of people in

every age category as well as to the growth of God's Kingdom of Grace...the church on earth. God's people must understand this process, based on God's Word, as a means of giving them direction and purpose throughout their lives. There does not need to be a conflict of ministries to people of various age groups, but rather a transition of spiritual growth opportunities as people move from one stage of life to another.

## ABSTRACT

There is a necessity to focus on the changing needs of people in the church and in society. Our nation has moved from a youth-oriented society to an aging society. For fulfillment, joy, and peace in the retirement years, the church has the opportunity to provide educational models enabling older adults to "reposition" themselves for the lifelong challenge God gives to His people. This paper will provide a rationale and a model for older adults to appreciate their continued God-given calling for meaningful service in Christ's Church by continued growth and a better understanding of their talents, gifts, and opportunities.

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Dedicated to...

To my Lord Jesus Christ for the privilege of serving as an undershepherd in His Kingdom of Grace.

To my wife Grace and our children: David, Christine, Kim, and Jeffrey for their support, encouragement, and patience.

To St. John Ev. Lutheran Church for the approval and the support to undertake this Major Applied Project.

## CHAPTER I

### A DIFFERENT WORLD FOR OLDER ADULTS

It is no secret that America is aging. The church reflects the rolling in of the "age wave", a phrase coined by psychologist Dr. Ken Dychtwald for the changing face of America.<sup>1</sup> The fastest growing segment of the American population today is the 85-plus group. For the first time in the history of this nation, the number of people in the United States over the age of 65 has exceeded those under 18 years. Older adults constitute over 60% of all single adults in this nation. The question that arises is, "Will the church be prepared for and meet the challenges and opportunities of an aging America?" There is an urgent and pressing need for the church to extend its ministry to, for, by, and with older adults who are receptive to new educational and experiential challenges in their retirement years.

#### An Aging Society

#### Demographic Changes

The National Symposium on the Church and Aging

(September, 1984) called for "essential institutional as

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<sup>1</sup>Ken Dychtwald, Age Wave: The Challenge and Opportunities of an Aging America (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tacher, Inc., 1988).

well as individual adjustment and change" due to the demographic forces in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Essentially, during most of this century the older population has been increasing at a much more rapid rate than the general population. A combination of the "baby boom" of post World War II, a rapid decline in the birth rate between 1960 and 1980 and a substantial decline in death rates in the 50-and-over age group in the 1970's have and will continue to contribute to a profound rate of growth in the size and proportion of those over 65.<sup>3</sup>

When the first federal census was taken in 1790, two percent of the American population (one in fifty) was 65 or older. For the sake of comparison, in 1900, only four percent of the nation's total population was 65 or older (about 3 million persons). Today, 12.7 percent, or 32 million persons are 65 and above. With the baby boom generation coming of age, the prediction is that in 2020 those over 65 years will account for 51 million persons, or 17.3 percent of the population.<sup>4</sup> The 1991 demographics of persons 65 years and older in the United States are illustrated by the U.S. Bureau of the Census on the next page.

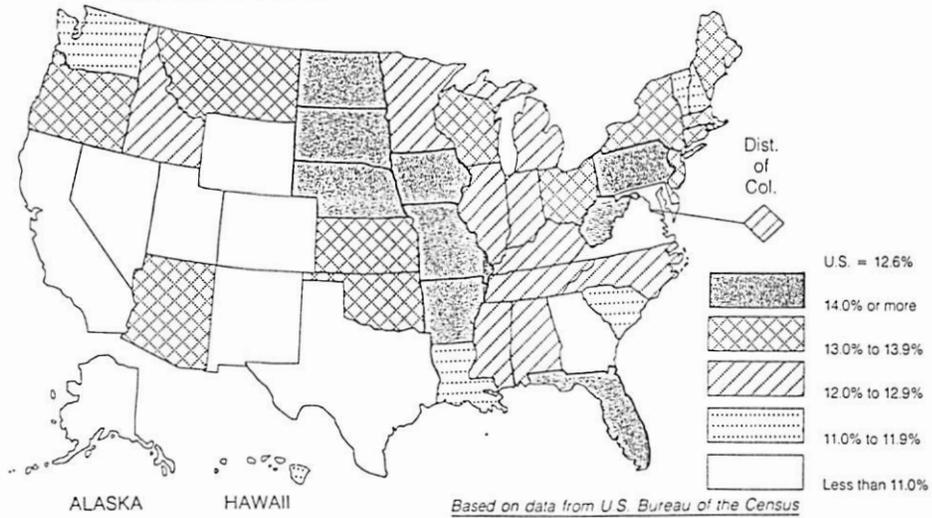
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<sup>2</sup>Michael C. Hendrickson, National Symposium on the Church and Aging: Major Findings and Recommendations (New York: Lutheran Council in the USA, 1984), 1.

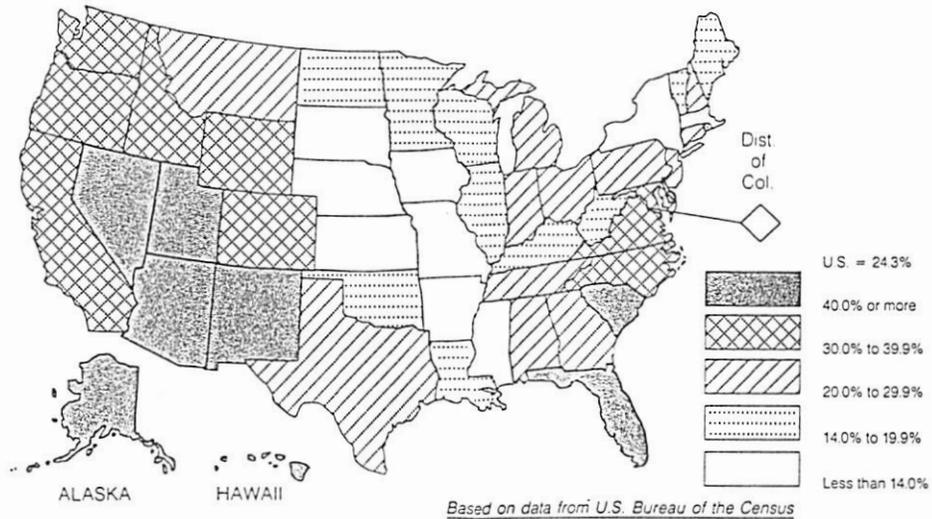
<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Win Arn, The Win Arn Growth Report (Monrovia, Calif.: The Institute for American Church Growth, 1989), 26:1.

PERSONS 65+ AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION: 1991



PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN POPULATION 65+: 1980 TO 1991



The 20th century has not only seen major shifts in the size of the older adult population compared to other age groups but also has experienced dramatic changes in the

<sup>5</sup>A Profile of Older Americans (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Retired Persons, 1992.)

composition of the older adult population.

Between 1900 and 1985, those aged 65-74 increased in number almost eight times, but those 75-84 increased eleven times, and those 85 and older twenty two times. Even more strikingly, since 1980, the last group--termed by demographers the "oldest old"--has grown 19 percent (to 2.7 million) while those 74-84 have increased 12 percent (to 8.85 million) and those 65-74, 7 percent (to 17 million).<sup>6</sup>

This shift is also being reflected in the social concerns of this nation and its government, with implications for future policies, programs, and activities.

#### Beyond Stereotypes

Someone once said, "Age doesn't matter...unless you are cheese." Aging is an attitude that begins in our minds. People can respond to growing older with a positive or a negative attitude.

In China, it is believed that the older a person is, the more wisdom and knowledge he or she has. When asked, "How old are you?" a 55-year-old in China might cheat a bit and claim to be 59. But an American asked the same question would be more likely to respond with "I never tell my age" or to cheat a bit and answer, "I'm 49." In our culture we believe that the older a person is, the less socially attractive he or she is. Jack Benny was 39 for a long time.<sup>7</sup>

Some in our society today function from a negative perspective which results in gerontophobia. They fear growing older and becoming dependent or a burden on others. A sense of meaninglessness often overwhelms them, especially when they have not prepared themselves for the aging

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<sup>6</sup>Stephen Sapp, Full of Years (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 29.

<sup>7</sup>Dychtwald, 25.

process. Very often this attitude is encouraged by the negative stereotypes which have become a part of our consciousness. So often negative stereotypes have little basis in reality.

If people can move beyond the negative stereotypes and make a positive transition, growing older can become an exciting new adventure with more freedom and possibilities. Unless the American society dispels the myths about aging, the negative stereotypes will continue to stifle the productivity and creativity of older adults. As in the secular society, the Christian Church needs to recognize this stage of life as a new and exciting opportunity to serve Christ and His Church with a sense of fulfillment and purpose.

To gain a positive perspective, it is necessary to look at some of the misleading stereotypes society has perpetuated on older adults. Only then will many older adults be able to reposition themselves for a world of extended opportunities and meaningful possibilities. Accepting the fact that there are some aspects of life which older adults cannot control such as physical, financial, or social limitations, the fear of aging and a prejudice against the old continue to distort reality for most older adults.

Many of us have already either consciously or unconsciously created a blueprint for ourselves of fearful and unattractive images of aging. When these personal images are gathered together, they represent an

"age trance" in whose spell most of us are currently held. The most pervasive myths of aging keep us from seeing the current reality and cloud our ability to shape the future in a more positive fashion. Imagine the effect of an entire nation's building a cultural point of view from the values of such a prejudiced blueprint.<sup>8</sup>

Ken Dychtwald lists six negative stereotypes which distort the reality of aging. They were summarized, as follows, by him in the January, 1993, issue of The Lutheran Witness.

Myth 1: People over 65 are old. There are neither biological nor psychological reasons to connect the number 65 to the onset of old age. In the not-too-distant future, we will likely think of old age as setting in at around 90, or even 100.

Myth 2: Most older people are in poor health. While older people may have chronic, controlled health problems as they age, they are not necessarily bothered or limited by them. Eighty percent of the health problems of older people are now thought to be preventable or postponable. What many of us call aging is instead a lifestyle issue.

Myth 3: Older minds are not as bright as young minds. Most of the losses in mental capacity happen to the very old, not to people in their 60s, 70s and early 80s, and are due not to age itself but to depression, drug interactions, lack of exercise, or one of many other reversible conditions....

Myth 4: Older people are unproductive. George Bernard Shaw wrote Farfetched Fables at 91. Between age 71 and 89, Michelangelo supervised the creation of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome....

Myth 5: Older people are unattractive and sexless. While the statistics do show a slight decrease in sexual activity with increasing age, the facts are far from what the myth would have us believe....

Myth 6: All older people are pretty much the same. ....there is no age group more varied in physical abilities; personal styles, tastes and desires; or financial capabilities than the older population. People in their later years become more, not less,

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<sup>8</sup>Dychtwald, 30.

diverse.<sup>9</sup>

In dealing with the negative stereotypes and myths of aging, accurate and truthful information about aging is vital. Only then will positive attitudes toward aging prevail since people will have more realistic information. This is necessary in light of the "baby boomers" of the post-World War II era reaching 65 and over. This will have an impact on how the American society respects and cares for older adults.

Every individual, sooner or later, will have to deal with the aging process for himself or herself. A person's attitude in life often determines the end results. Very often a positive or a negative attitude will determine whether an athlete wins or loses. So also in human development, people tend to grow up to their expectations. Expectations of what will be are important factors in what will happen. Educators are familiar with the "Pygmalion effect" on students.<sup>10</sup> If a teacher has high expectations for a student to do well, the probability is higher than average that he will succeed and reach those expectations. The reverse is also true. When teachers have little confidence in a student or views a student as lazy or incompetent, the student often lives up to that negative

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<sup>9</sup>Ken Dychtwald, "The Age Wave," The Lutheran Witness, 112,1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, January 1993): 5.

<sup>10</sup>Arthur H. Becker, Ministry with Older Persons (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 20.

expectation of the teacher.

If older adults anticipate old age in a negative light, it will probably become a negative experience for them. Yet with more positive insights, older adults can refuse to be intimidated by age or retreat into the past, but rather, they can move into the future with new confidence.

New seniors do not think of themselves as old or declining...They view the future as a time of harvest and renewal rather than the beginning of a cold winter. These people function on new assumptions about living. If retired, they see the gift of new free time as an opportunity for work, for learning, for service, for growing, and for play. They are focused on the present and the future, not the past; on serving, not on being served; on involvement, not disengagement.<sup>11</sup>

A positive attitude provides a model for successful aging as illustrated from this quote from Tilman Smith:

"Who wants to be ninety-one?" a young man of nineteen asked with a sneer. "I do," replied a ninety-year-old man modestly. Most of us want to grow old.

The ninety-year-old man spoke in favor of living. It's as though he had said, "I belong here. I want to live a long physical life not because I dread death, but because new horizons are the birthright of older persons as well as the young. I want to live in joy and peace and help to create joy and peace for others...."

A ninety-year-old person can look ahead, guided by the vision of a today worth living and tomorrow worth anticipating. It's a birthright. The days ahead, whether you're nineteen or ninety-one, can be the best part of your life, if you put your heart, years, and mind to it. Life is for the living.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Win Arn and Charles Arn, Catch the Age Wave (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993), 30.

<sup>12</sup>Tilman R. Smith, In Favor of Growing Older (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1981), 17.

Aging: Crisis or Opportunity in the Church

Reflecting a "Graying of America"

In a little over 200 years America has experienced a doubling in the life expectancy of its population. Never before in all of history have so many people had the opportunity to reach advanced years. Since the world began, until this decade, only one in ten people could have expected to live to the age of 65; now, 80% of America will live that long or longer.<sup>13</sup>

According to Ken Dychtwald, older adults can be separated into three age groups: 50-64 - middle adulthood, 65-79 - late adulthood, and 80 plus - old age.<sup>14</sup> Middle adulthood can be viewed as a positive time in life's journey. The children are usually grown; many own mortgage free homes; and they have the highest disposable income of any age group. Most people in the late adulthood group live active and independent lives. While, in many ways, this group is very similar to middle adulthood, concerns center more on health issues. Old age finds many still very active, but there is a marked decrease in independence and an increase in health problems. Americans within each of these age categories are very diverse and will be, increasingly, a rediscovered generation whose lifestyle and

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<sup>13</sup>William Hulme, "The Need for Meaning in Aging," Personal Notes from the Aging with Purpose and Grace Conference (Kenosha, Wis.: University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Oct. 1991), 2.

<sup>14</sup>Dychtwald, 273.

needs will impact both the American society and the Christian Church.

The churches are leading the way with memberships rapidly growing older. Mainline church bodies report that their membership is about 10% older than the national average.<sup>15</sup> This "graying of America" will have further impact as the present population of 32 million Americans over the age of 65 will double by the 2025 to a total of 73 million of which 15 million will be older than 85.<sup>16</sup>

The demographic changes also impact the church. The concern and involvement of older adults in the church can not be viewed as peripheral but essential to the growth and health of the church. As the American society moves from one age to the next, the church must understand its continuing and changing role. The cliché, "the future of our congregation is with the youth", will find competition with the reality that the future of congregations is increasingly with the aging. Old age may never be revered in America as it was in ancient China, but the shifting demographic balance may well erase the stigma that the young in America have attached to age and to aging.

The demographic makeup of many congregations today in

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<sup>15</sup>Ross Henry Larson, "Aging May Be in your Future, Pastor," The Clergy Journal, LXVII, 4 (Seymour, Ind.: Graessl-Mercer Company, February 1991): 6.

<sup>16</sup>Joan Beck, "Competing Forces Shape Future for Elderly," Sheboygan Press (February 16, 1992), 9.

America is about 9% of adults who are 65 or older.<sup>17</sup> In long-established communities some congregations can have up to a fourth of their membership over 65 years of age. For older adults the church often remains the focal point of their interest and activities.

Having been sustained throughout their lives by their faith in God, they are depending on the church, with its body of concerned people, to help make their later years happy and fruitful.

Because of illness or frailty, some will find it difficult to remain actively in touch with the church. They look to the congregation to bring the church's ministrations to them. Others beset with burdensome problems depend on the church and its members to be compassionate and reassuring as they struggle over the meaning of life in their declining years.

The congregation is the setting where older people hopefully find the climate to sustain them in their faith in God and man.<sup>18</sup>

The fact that older people are here to stay is a reality. In the past, it has been said of youth that "not to use them is to lose them." The church has a golden opportunity to involve older adults in the work of the church. If this opportunity is not utilized, there will be a loss of what older adults can contribute out of their experience and wisdom for the growth of God's Kingdom work. The goal is to catch the "age wave" which Win Arn and Charles Arn call "a rediscovered generation" which will continue to impact society and the church as the "baby boom

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<sup>17</sup>Arthur Rismiler, "Older People in the Congregation," A Self-Study (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio), 1.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

generation" grows older.<sup>19</sup>

#### Competing Forces Shape the Future for Older Adults

Inevitably, the graying of America will bring sweeping changes. The World War II generation is slipping into old age with better health, more money, and a longer life expectancy than all of its predecessors. Ken Dychtwald pictures older America as "a sleeping giant" which is waking up.<sup>20</sup>

As decision makers become aware that America's elders are growing more numerous each day, have more money than most people suspect and are willing to spend it, vote more regularly than younger people, and are willing to pound the pavement to make their viewpoints known, the power of older America will snowball.<sup>21</sup>

There is also a growing fear and increasing resentment from many younger people, some of whom are actively attempting to raise the taxes of the elderly, to cut their entitlements, ration their health care, and to push for euthanasia. While it is possible that there may be an increasing generation-gap tension, it is possible that the needs of both generations, young and old, can be mutually resolved with the positives outweighing the negatives. It is necessary for the young to understand that they also will grow old and for the old that they were once young.

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<sup>19</sup>Win Arn and Charles Arn, "Are You Ready for the Age Wave?" Evangelism 4, 4 (Cedarburg, Wisconsin: August 1990): 145.

<sup>20</sup>Dychtwald, 51.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science in February, 1992, listed some positives about aging.<sup>22</sup> First of all, most young people and adults today will live to age 65 and beyond. Only 20% of people in developed nations do not. There has been a remarkable increase in longevity in the twentieth century. By 2025, only 15% of those born won't live long enough to grow old.

Secondly, continued progress will be made in preventing and treating illnesses and improving lifestyles.

It may be possible to delay aging with revolutionary genetic and biochemical techniques now being tested in experiments with fruit flies, yeast and nematodes....<sup>23</sup>

Along with that, the growing interest in wellness programs is contributing to the increased good health of the over-65 age group.

You can age well--with grace and wisdom, wit and experience, energy and vitality. This is realism, not fantasy.

To a considerable extent you can decide whether or not to age. You can choose to age poorly or to age well. But aging well is not easy. It requires some essential knowledge, a plan, work, and perseverance. You will probably live longer than you think, and you need to plan for it. You need to cultivate a healthy mind in a healthy body, and you will need to find ways to compensate for a slowing biology to achieve your personal potential. You need to avoid major illness. You will be working primarily to improve the quality of your senior years, not to greatly prolong your life. You need to strengthen your mind, your muscles, and your personal relationships. There is no magic formula. There is a successful strategy, but the particular plan and the specific goals must be your own. You need to be

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<sup>22</sup>Beck, 5.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

in control.

In the opening words of Browning's Rabbi Ben Ezra:  
 "Grow old along with me  
 the best is yet to be  
 the last of life  
 for which the first was made.." <sup>24</sup>

Thirdly, according to Beck, there is a growing trend for employers to seek more older workers, making workplace changes to attract and to hold them. Retraining programs help older adults to acquire new skills or career changes so that "old" does not mean "obsolete." <sup>25</sup> It is also in the best interests of the employers to have older and more experienced workers remain on the payroll. This also benefits the nation as more people continue to pay into Social Security longer, rather than begin taking payments.

Beck also sees the negatives of growing older which continue to impact people. For example, many of the nonfatal health problems of aging still persist. Not nearly enough research has been done with problems, such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, osteoporosis, and osteoarthritis which can rob people of many years of productive and independent living.

Along with this, there are the increasing demands to cut back on health entitlements and the proposals to increase Medicare premiums. There is no doubt that older adults use a disproportionate share of the nation's medical

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<sup>24</sup>James F. Fries, M.D., Aging Well (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1989), xv.

<sup>25</sup>Beck, 9.

resources. There may also be good rationale not to provide for excessive life-saving measures in cases that are hopeless, but that also brings about ethical concerns of euthanasia. No doubt, more and more employers will rely on government intervention in providing for and limiting health benefits as seen in the present political environment.

How well older adults will live in the years ahead is being reshaped by complex new forces. Some are encouraging and some are very troublesome. Agreeing with Ken Dychtwald, Joan Beck makes the following statement:

In many ways, today's remarkable elder generation--who have made this nation vigorous, successful and prosperous for more than four decades--are essentially inventing a new stage in life. They have become a potent and respected force in politics. They hold significant economic power. Their needs create new jobs. Old age will never be the same again.<sup>26</sup>

"Our society is getting older but the old are getting younger," says Robert B. Maxwell, vice-president of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).<sup>27</sup> As older America continues to grow, there will be both positive and negative forces to which the American society and the church will be challenged to give attention.

If the challenge is to be met with success, it will depend on several factors, according to Dychtwald.

It depends on whether or not we can  
\* uproot the ageism and gerontophobia that cloud our

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Wade Clark Roof, "The Spirit of the Elderculture," Christian Century (May 1990): 530.

hopes for the future and replace them with a new, more positive image of aging.

- \* replace the limiting confines of the linear life plan with a flexible, cyclic plan, which is more appropriate to the shifting needs of longer life.
- \* create a new spectrum of family relationships that are matched to the sexuality, companionship, and friendship needs of adults.
- \* discover ways to grow old well, in the absence of debilitating disease.
- \* create products and services that will provide older men and women with comfort, convenience, and pleasure.
- \* achieve cooperation among Americans of all ages in creating a social system that is fair and equitable to everyone.<sup>28</sup>

The challenge of the "age wave" is not only "the opportunity to live long, drawing much from life," but also a time for older Americans "to give more back, enriching society and ourselves with the special qualities and deep experiences of long life."<sup>29</sup> Older adults are "no longer called senior citizens;" they are "chronologically gifted."<sup>30</sup> If the church is alert to the challenges of the future for older adults, it can provide a positive foundation for a Christian view of life since older adults are among the most religiously active people in the nation.

#### Developing a Christian View of Life and Aging

Life is a sacred trust. Some day God will hold each person accountable for how life has been lived. The reason for life given as a sacred trust from Almighty God is to

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<sup>28</sup>Dychtwald, 350-351.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 351.

<sup>30</sup>Russel Chandler, Facing Toward 2001 (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 35.

glorify God and live in a positive relationship with other people. This relationship with God and man is a way of life which is healthier than a humanistic secular view of life. Both approaches to life include aging. A Christian view of life, according to Win and Charles Arn, provides "hope for today and anticipation for tomorrow."<sup>31</sup>

After the fall of man into sin, the Old Testament affirms that aging is inevitable. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 puts all of life into perspective.

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die;  
 a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is  
                   planted;  
 a time to kill, and time to heal;  
 a time to break down, and a time to build up;  
 a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
 a time to mourn, and a time to dance;...  
 a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from  
                   embracing;  
 a time to seek, and a time to lose;  
 a time to keep, and a time to throw away;...  
 a time to love, and a time to hate;...

All of life, which includes the aging process, is in a continuing state of change. That is why the psalmist in Psalm 90:12 writes, "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom." The wisdom of God gives insight into three basic questions of life: "Who am I?", "Why am I here?" and "Where am I going?"

The Holy Scriptures, first of all, affirm that mankind is created "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:27). Man is

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<sup>31</sup>Arn and Arn, Catch the Age Wave, 39.

God's special creation. According to Luther's Small Catechism,

The image of God was this:

- A. Adam and Eve truly knew God as He wishes to be known and were perfectly happy in Him.
- B. They were righteous and holy, doing God's will.<sup>32</sup>

This is supported in Colossians 3:10, "Put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him." Also in Ephesians 4:24, it is written, "Put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness." Even though mankind has lost this image because of sin, God reached out with His saving love in Jesus Christ to give man a lifelong purpose to rebuild His image which will find completion in heaven. Man is unique and special within God's creation, possessing body, mind, and soul. Positive insight into man's uniqueness is found in the Bible.

Man's uniqueness is advanced by the fact that God has a claim on all believers as St. Paul writes in I Corinthians 6:19-20:

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body (NIV).

Since believers are "not our own," every stage of life has a special meaning and responsibility as Christians use their time, talents, gifts, and possessions to the glory of God

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<sup>32</sup>Martin Luther, Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation, Concordia Publishing House, 1991), 111.

and in service to others. This is a lifelong commitment as long as God gives life and breath to His people.

Knowing "Who I am" leads to the second question of "Why am I here?" St. Paul in Romans 12:1 states very clearly:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

"Who am I?" and "Why am I here?" are interrelated. Being called and sanctified by the Holy Spirit as God's special people in Christ Jesus (I Corinthians 6:11, Romans 1:16, II Thessalonians 2:13-14, and I Peter 2:9), Christian believers are motivated to commit their lives to God throughout the various stages of life's journey.

Because God has endowed me with certain unique gifts and talents, I feel compelled to use them in his service. Because I belong to God, I am called to be obedient to him and do what he commands. I am called to serve and to be a good steward of my time, talents, and resources during my entire lifetime....Because of who I am and what I have been given, I believe my purpose is to participate in the fulfillment of Christ's primary purpose to "go and make disciples."<sup>33</sup>

Christians can never retire from their God-given calling as "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light" (I Peter 2:9 NIV). Dr. Donald McGavran in the video, "Live Long and Love It!" said regarding old age and retirement:

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<sup>33</sup>Arn and Arn, Catch the Age Wave, 43.

Our life doesn't end when we retire. Our life goes on. We no longer have to work to earn money enough to live on; but we can do all kinds of good things that God wants done...there are so many people we can counsel...there are so many people we can love! There's so much change in the world that we can bring about if only we will recognize that this is our task. This is the reason that we have all the experience that we have had. This is the reason why we are born!<sup>34</sup>

For many people, old age is a time where losses and limitations affect self-image, especially in the present "throw away" culture of today. The realization that, regardless of age, God has a purpose for each person can give new meaning and hope in a world where many reject the elderly and expect them to fail. Life is a "spiritual journey" and "older Christians have no mandate to retire from the stewardship of the world."<sup>35</sup> God's people are called to serve in building God's Kingdom as God blesses them to be a blessing to others and to give glory to God by who they are and what they do.

This, then, anticipates the third question of "Where am I going?" Life is not a matter of recklessly living it up before death intervenes and ends it all. For the Christian believer there is the assurance of eternal life (John 17:3, John 3:16,36, Romans 10:9). St. Paul puts it into a positive perspective in Philipians 1:21-26:

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I

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<sup>34</sup>Donald McGavran, "Live Long and Love It" video (Monrovia, Calif.: Church Growth, 1990).

<sup>35</sup>Eugene C. Bianchi, Aging as a Spiritual Journey (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989), 161.

am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

With St. Paul, the Christian can find joy in each phase of life, knowing that life is a series of transitions as a believer focuses on the Lord Jesus Christ for purpose and for meaning in life and in eternity. As someone once said, "the best is yet to come." This certainty also diminishes the anxiety and problems of each phase of life as Christians live with a profound trust in God.

The big difference for Christians is that God is the center of our existence, not self. We do not belong to ourselves. We have an eternal calling to pursue, individual assignments to complete. Our life's purpose is to follow and serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Life on this planet is not all there is. As one song puts it, "This world is not my home--I'm just a passin' through...."

In many ways, life is like climbing a mountain--the higher we go, the tougher it gets. But the closer we come to the summit, the better our perspective. And the older we become, the more clearly we understand that this life is not all there is...

My life philosophy provides me with an understanding of my identity, my life's purpose, and my ultimate destiny.<sup>36</sup>

As Christ "dwells in us," a Christian has a deeper understanding of God's plan for living. God works to sustain and to deepen the relationship of a believer with Him and with others even amidst the struggles of life, which

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<sup>36</sup>Arn and Arn, Catch the Age Wave, 47-48.

God will also work out for a blessing.

The Danish theologian Regin Prenter called the providence of God "the gospel of creation," by which he meant to say that in whatever befalls us in God's creation, it is God's intention that even the tragic event should in a general way move toward the fulfillment of God's ultimate purpose, the coming kingdom. In a more personal sense, it is God's intention that every tragic event should be redeemed by him and by us in such a way as to enhance, deepen, and strengthen the bond between God, us, and each other. God is then struggling with us to "redeem the time."<sup>37</sup>

The Holy Scriptures have much to say about aging and the obligations toward older adults. The process of getting older is inevitable since man's fall into sin, but God uses even that process ultimately to end in new life for a believer.

There are two closing thoughts. First of all, as was noted previously, human beings are created in "the image of God," giving them special power, role, and worth in God's order of creation with the opportunity for a personal relationship with God. Secondly, people are created to be in community. Meaning is found in loving and being loved through which Christian believers can demonstrate, in part, the will and "image of God." These two concerns make life purposeful and challenging in every phase of life's "spiritual journey." There is value and dignity for each human being which enables them to age well even "with the deterioration of their bodies without losing a sense of

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<sup>37</sup>Becker, 103.

self-worth.<sup>38</sup> Both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible reflect the attitude that older adults possess greater wisdom and are worthy of respect. (See Appendix A for additional Bible references pertaining to old age.)

### Responding to the "Age Wave"

While Christianity is eschatological, or future-oriented, the Kingdom of God (Power and Grace) is already present in the believer and in the world. The fullness of God's Kingdom is yet to come, but while the believer is waiting for the Kingdom of Glory (eternal life), there are ongoing opportunities to contribute to the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:18-20. This happens at all stages of life as a believer makes God-pleasing decisions and lives out a Christ-centered lifestyle.

Older adults are often a receptive people, and the Christian Church is being called to utilize this receptivity. For many within the church, there is the need to change some of the accepted paradigms of the past and the present. "A paradigm is 'a grid of values through which we interpret and understand our life.'"<sup>39</sup> The old paradigms, centered on serving older adults, focus on a ministry to older adults for whom social fellowship and/or pastoral visitations are provided. The new paradigm is an inclusive

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<sup>38</sup>Sapp, 127.

<sup>39</sup>Win Arn, "Catching the Age Wave" Evangelism 6,4 (Cedarburg, Wisconsin: August 1992): 152.

ministry to, with, for, and by older adults. No longer are older adults viewed only as needing volunteer help and caretakers, but now they themselves can be those volunteers and caretakers for young and for old.

Many older adults are no longer willing to sit on the sidelines and wait to die. They have too much living to do yet.

The religious elder struggles against the modern trend to disenfranchise the old, to remove them from seats of power. But the goal of this effort is not the attainment of more power, in the sense of domination and control; rather, the old desire to stay at the center of events in order to transform power from its oppressive uses to a resourceful energy that works for universal betterment. This new kind of power resembles the biblical image of the appearance of God's might to Elijah as a gentle breeze (I Kings 19:9 -16). Such spiritual and human power is a far cry from the power of marching armies or churning machines. It is the power of insight and persuasion, which does not ignore evil and ignorance in the world, but believes that wisdom and goodness can prevail.<sup>40</sup>

Win and Charles Arn give three reasons why and how the church can respond to receptive older adults.<sup>41</sup> First of all, older adults have encountered a host of life situations and "transition events" (See Appendix B for the Arn Modified Senior Stress Scale). When one experiences "transition events" successfully, people are very often open to other changes in their lives.

...over half of the events typically occur in the lives of persons over 50! The older persons become, the more frequently they experience life-changing events. These

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<sup>40</sup>Bianchi, 210.

<sup>41</sup>Arn, Evangelism 4,4: 147-151.

events provide "windows of opportunity" in which people seem to move from resistance or indifference to hearing the gospel, to receptivity and openness. Another way of seeing these events is as experiences which the Holy Spirit uses to open people's eyes to needs which cannot be filled in human terms....

One of the best ways to show that the Christian faith and your church community provide a relevant response to issues older adults face, is to plan senior ministry around some of these "transitional events."<sup>42</sup>

A second way for the church to respond to receptive older adults, in addition to a senior ministry centered around "transitional events," is to provide more meaningful relationships with others. Ken Dychtwald in Age Wave writes:

Intimate relationships make a profound difference in the quality of life at any age. Yet, in the later years of life, the making and keeping of relationships can become more difficult.<sup>43</sup>

With retirement, relationships change and often friends of the same age retire and move away while children are busy pursuing their own family activities and careers. This potentially empty existence needs to be filled with positive and meaningful relationships with friends "who hold the same spiritual values."<sup>44</sup> There is the need for an ongoing caring and sharing faith relationship which finds meaningful assurance in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Finally, the church can provide opportunities for older adults to be involved in purposeful activities and

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 147-149.

<sup>43</sup>Dychtwald, 209.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 251.

make positive contributions to the church and society. Win and Charles Arn note that life can be divided into three basic life periods.

- 1) Through age 25: Preparation...experimentation... defining oneself through acquiring individual values, education, a unique self-image. One's priorities in this period of life tend to be understandably self-centered.
- 2) From age 25 through 65: Productivity...defining oneself through a career, material acquisitions, marriage, family. One's priorities in period of life tend to focus on financial security.
- 3) Age 65 and over: Redefinition. People usually define themselves vocationally. But upon retirement this is no longer relevant...seniors often find themselves looking for meaningful activity and sense of purpose...those who have been able to successfully redefine their self-identity say it is the elixir to good physical and psychological health.<sup>45</sup>

The Christian congregation is challenged to take the blessing of older adults, who are receptive to growing, sharing, and caring, seriously in the active discipleship of God's Kingdom work. With older adults having better health, adequate resources, skills, wisdom, and discretionary time, they have the ability to move the church of Jesus Christ forward. In Jeremiah 29:11 (RSV) there is a word for people of all ages: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" Older adults may retire from a career or profession, but Christians have an active discipleship as long as God permits.

...Dr. Donald McGavran..., said: "So many people think their lives stop when they retire,...that their real

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<sup>45</sup>Arn and Arn, Evangelism 4,4: 150-151.

work has ended. When I retired at age 68, the most important work of my entire life began. Let me assure you, my friend, that your real life has begun, and probably your most important contribution will be made in the coming years. But see to it that you deal with important matters. See to it that you deal with the church. See to it that you deal with bringing people to Christ."

Or, as Billy Graham recently said when asked about his plans for retirement, "I wasn't aware that Christians retire from the ministry."<sup>46</sup>

The church of today has the opportunity to help older adults "reposition" themselves and give their time, insights, experience, and energy for the welfare of others. As they grow in their own faith and in a positive relationship with the Lord, they will experience a Christian community where "every person is valuable and needed and every person is able to love and be loved."<sup>47</sup>

A congregation has almost unlimited opportunities to provide an atmosphere of ministry to, with, for, and by older adults. Few people are so infirm that they are incapable of giving something. If nothing else, they give others the joy of helping someone else. The psalmist in Psalm 71:17-18 provides motivation for life-long ministry, even in old age.

Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come (NIV).

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 151.

<sup>47</sup>Blaine Taylor, The Church's Ministry with Older Adults (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 28.

Then in Acts 20:35 the words of Jesus re-affirm the fact that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

When a church harnesses its older members' interests, abilities, and resources of wisdom and experience to serve their own generation and others, it will have a much more effective ministry with its immediate constituency and with people outside its fellowship. The work of the pastor will become much more effective when he shares it with lay members....

Work with aging and elderly in a church is much more efficient and effective than merely work for them. It enhances their sense of freedom and self-worth. It makes them aware of their high calling as children of God and members of the body of Christ, and enables them to view their lives as good stewards of their resources and abilities.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>David O. Moberg, "What the Graying of America Means to the Local Church" Christianity Today 37 (November 20, 1981): 32.

CHAPTER II  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND NURTURE  
AS A LIFE-LONG PROCESS

With a focus on older adults in a changing society and the church, the concern of this Major Applied Project is to present the fact that Christian education is a life-long process from the cradle-to-the-grave. The end goal, as David Moberg stated, is to help older adults to become more "aware of their high calling as children of God and members of the body of Christ, ...to view their lives as good stewards of their resources and abilities."<sup>49</sup>

Too often within the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, the post-confirmation mentality still hinders the process of continuing education. This causes too many Christians to drift in the troubled waters of life. If Christians can only realize the importance of Christian education as a life-long-process and a "repositioning" component in the transitions of life, then many who experience the choppy, turbulent waters of life would have a chart and a compass that would sustain them, give them hope, and point them in the right direction to Jesus as their personal Lord and

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

Savior. St. Peter writes in I Peter 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..." This "living hope" becomes a daily reality as God's people "continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of...and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:14,15).

Martin Luther puts the "living hope" into perspective when he wrote, first of all, about the Sacraments in his

Large Catechism:

Baptism is a very different thing from all other water, not by virtue of the natural substance, but because here something nobler is added. God himself stakes his honor, his power, and his might on it. Therefore it is not simply a natural water, but a divine, heavenly, holy, and blessed water--praise it in any other terms you can--all by virtue of the Word, which is a heavenly, holy Word which no one can sufficiently extol for it contains and conveys all the fullness of God....Thus a Christian life is nothing else than a daily Baptism, once begun and ever continued.<sup>50</sup>

About the Sacrament of the Altar, Luther stresses that it is "appropriately called the food of the soul since it nourishes and strengthens the new man."<sup>51</sup> Then he goes on to say:

While it is true that through Baptism we are first born

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<sup>50</sup>The Book of Concord, trans. and ed Theodore G. Tappert, Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert H. Fischer, and Arthur C. Piepkorn (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 438 (17,18), 445 (65).

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 449 (23).

anew, our human flesh and blood have not lost their old skin. There are so many hindrances and temptations of the devil and the world that we often grow weary and faint, at times even stumble. The Lord's Supper is given as a daily food and sustenance so that our faith may refresh and strengthen itself and not weaken in the struggle but grow continually stronger.<sup>52</sup>

The Sacraments along with the Word of God are the means of renewal and strengthening of faith, which need to be a vital part of every Christian life.

With the Sacraments Luther also encourages Christians to "cling to the Scriptures."<sup>53</sup>

Let this serve as an exhortation, then, not only for us who are grown and advanced in years, but also for the young people who ought to be brought up in Christian doctrine and a right understanding of it....Therefore let every head of a household remember that it is his duty, by God's injunction and command, to teach or have taught to his children the things they ought to know.<sup>54</sup>

This thought is underscored by Luther as he writes about the Third Commandment in the Large Catechism.

Remember, then, that you must be concerned not only about hearing the Word but also about learning and retaining it. Do not regard it as an optional or unimportant matter. It is the commandment of God, and he will require of you an accounting of how you have heard and learned and honored his Word....Even though you know the Word perfectly and have already mastered everything, still you are daily under the dominion of the devil, who neither day nor night relaxes his effort to steal upon you unawares and to kindle in your heart unbelief and wicked thoughts against all these commandments. Therefore you must continually keep God's Word in your heart, on your lips, and in your ears....It always awakens new understanding, new pleasure, and a new spirit of devotion, and it constantly cleanses the

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 449 (23,24).

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 456 (83).

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 456 (85,87).

heart and its meditations.<sup>55</sup>

This ministry of Word and Sacraments as the Means of Grace, through which the Holy Spirit works, is a growth process and a lifelong necessity. It should be a Christian's lifelong goal to be instructed and to grow in the full "counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) in order to reflect God's perfect will in the daily life of a believer.

Since Christians are joint partakers in God's grace (Titus 1:4, Jude 3, Philippians 1:7), they join together in the study of God's holy, inspired, and inerrant Word. It can be a joyful experience learning with each other and from each other through the working of the Holy Spirit. The prayerful concern is that God's people can "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18). Jesus says to each believer today, "You call Me teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am" (John 13:13). This relationship with Christ is meant to be an enriching and strengthening process.

#### A Teaching Church to Nurture God's People

The goal of a Christian congregation is to be a teaching church which fulfills the command given in the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20). A teaching church is a community of believers, regardless of age, who have a common commitment and desire

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 378 (98,100), 379 (101).

to grow in their faith so they can be better equipped to make disciples of others by going, baptizing, and teaching.

In an article entitled "Achieving the Christian Education" in the Your Church magazine (November/December 1982), Kenneth Blazier notes five functions which must be carried out if a church is to succeed in its teaching ministry. They are as follows:

Affirm the foundations of the church's teaching ministry. Plan for the most effective teaching ministry. Develop leaders for a variety of ministries. Nurture persons in Christian growth....Enable the fulfillment of the church's mission in the world....to foster the intersection of the Christian faith with life, to develop a sense of vocation, and to involve the church as individual and as a corporate group, in mission.<sup>56</sup>

The last two points of Blazier are summed up also in the Principles of Christian Education for the Local Parish (Bulletin No. 90582) put out by the Board of Parish Services of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

...overall goal of a Christian education program: that, through the Word and the Spirit of God, people of all ages may know God, especially His seeking and forgiving love in Christ, may respond in faith, and grow up into Christian maturity;  
and that, seeing themselves as the reconciled, redeemed children of God and individual members of Christ's Body, the church, they may live happily in peace with God, themselves, and their fellow human beings;  
and may express their joy in the worship of God and in loving service to others;  
and that in the love of God they may value all of God's creative work in the world and church, and witness openly to Christ as the Savior of all people, participating actively in God's mission to the church

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<sup>56</sup>Kenneth D. Blazier, "Achieving Christian Education," Your Church (November/December 1982): 38-39.

and the world; and to live in Christian hope.<sup>57</sup>

To achieve this goal it is necessary to instill in the hearts of all God's people, regardless of their age, a desire to grow in their faith relationship with God and a caring relationship with others. Dr. Walter Wolbrecht defined the church as "God's school of life for all of life."<sup>58</sup>

### Envisioning Faith Development

An accepted fact of life today in the secular world is that continuing education is not only an ideal to be pursued, but a necessity for existence in many of life's vocations and professions. John Elias, in The Foundations and Practice of Adult Religious Education, makes a strong supporting statement.

To be human means to learn. To be fully human entails a lifelong effort in acquiring knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors. The complexity of life and the constant changes that persons face increasingly demand that adults continue to learn throughout their lives....Though in all societies and cultures adults continue to learn throughout their lives, in the modern industrial society this learning has increased because of greater interpersonal demands, the need for constant development in one's work skills, and the greater opportunities that are afforded through increased

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<sup>57</sup>Principles of Christian Education for the Local Parish No. 90582, ed. Earl H. Gaulke (St. Louis: Board for Parish Services, The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod), 2.

<sup>58</sup>John F. Choitz, "Conclusion," Christian Education in Transit (River Forest, Ill.: Lutheran Education Association, 1969), 83.

leisure time.<sup>59</sup>

If contemporary, secular society sees the need for continuing education for adults, how much more important is the need for continuing Christian education as a lifelong process in the spiritual development which is for eternity? If the church can help people make this practical transition from "being finished after Confirmation" to a life-long commitment of Christian education, perhaps the church would once again be an influential and productive part of society with a greater impact in modeling a Christian lifestyle and values along with the mandate to save lost souls.

To accomplish this transition in a positive and meaningful way, it is necessary to understand why adult Christians often do not participate in adult Christian education. A study by McKenzie (1978, 1980) of urban parishes in the Midwest gave the following reasons:

Seven dimensions of nonparticipation were found: (1) programmatic non-relevance was found among 14 percent of those not participating; (2) involvement in other activities ranked highest in the twenty to twenty-nine age group; (3) physical incapacity was highest among older persons; (4) alienation from church activities was found most frequently among young and middle-age adults with more than twelve years of schooling; (5) negative attitude toward many adults over fifty-four and at least one fifth of the adults in the twenty-six to fifty-three group; (6) estrangement or feeling of not belonging was found among all age groups; (7) marginality or non-joining life style was found in one

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<sup>59</sup>John L. Elias, The Foundations and Practice of Adult Religious Education (Malabar, Florida: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1982), 93.

third of those sampled.<sup>60</sup>

These concerns of adult Christians challenge local congregations to make a concentrated effort to eliminate as many needless barriers to adult Christian education as possible.

A positive attitude by professional and lay church leaders is a starting point. Those who are willing to try continuing adult Christian education need to have positive and quality educational experiences. Elias also notes another concern in promoting adult educational experiences.

The importance of adapting religious education to the life transitions and phases of adults is an important implication from the research on participation and motivation. These transitions include leaving home, first job, marriage, children, increasing responsibility in the community, divorce, retirement, and so forth. These transitions are variously called "teachable moments," "marker events," or "trigger events."<sup>61</sup>

Outside the family unit, the church is best qualified to provide for these transitional life-related changes. The home and the church can provide the setting for the most natural transitional relationships if there is a caring, loving, and supportive faith community present, meeting the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of people. Many of these needs can be met through positive educational experiences for all ages. The goal is to provide a continuity of learning between childhood and adulthood with

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 97.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 100.

an emphasis on more intergenerational forms of learning. This can take place with a faith community which emphasizes a working together of home, school, work, and retirement.

### Life-long Faith Development

In providing a continuity for learning there are stages of faith development which some experts say can be identified. In the Scriptures the concern for faith development is noted in I Corinthians 3:1-2, where St. Paul writes,

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly - mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it (NIV).

And in I Peter 2:2-3, we read,

Like newborn babies crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good (NIV).

In the New Testament, "milk" symbolized a simple, but saving faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. "Solid food" symbolizes an understanding that goes beyond the coming to faith to integrating faith into the thoughts, space, and actions of a believer's daily life. Spiritual growth is a concern as St. Paul indicates in Ephesians 6:10ff:

...be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes...Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground (NIV).

To become a disciple of Jesus means there is a desire to grow in the faith relationship with God and to be an example and a witness to others of God's will in daily

living. Each Christian must accept personal responsibility for how he or she will grow in their Christian faith which is a "cradle-to-the-grave" process. This becomes an exciting challenge for each believer, regardless of biological age as the Lord asks His people to "search the Scriptures" (John 5:39).

In the book, Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian, James Fowler suggests seven specific stages in faith development. (See Appendix C for the summary of the seven stages.) These stages provide some strong implications for Christian education in the church as a life-long, "cradle-to-the-grave" process. In the process of faith development and its seven stages, the caution needs to be added that the Holy Spirit can and will work in His own way in each human being. The ways and working of God Almighty are far beyond the rationalistic understanding of man.

At the same time, an insight into this process as noted above by Fowler is very informative. It can help educators use organized knowledge about faith to more effectively meet the needs of people in transition. Alan Knox gives the following informative statement:

Practitioners can apply generalizations about adult development and learn: (1) to understand age-related characteristics of adults in a community or in a classroom at one point in time and (2) to understand the trends and processes of change in individual adults over time....Practitioners typically deal with the whole functioning person, unlike some scholars who conduct research on narrow aspects of behavior such as memory,

reaction time, or self-concept.<sup>62</sup>

The development of human beings is an ongoing process which is influenced by both external as well as internal factors. For a well balanced and integrated life, the learning process needs to continue to adapt and grow in the mental, social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

#### Adult Learning Performance

Human beings, regardless of age, can learn and adapt their knowledge base and behavior as they are confronted with new data and experiences. Adult educators, for the most part, accept the conclusion that age is not a barrier to learning. The learning ability of adults declines in a limited way over the years. Knox gives this comment:

Estimates of learning ability are estimates of ceiling capacity. In practice people perform substantially below their capacities. Even for indices of learning ability that may decline gradually during adulthood if the person functions throughout adulthood at no more than two thirds of young adult capacity, a decline in ceiling capacity of less than one third in old age would have no practical effect on performance....Based mainly on cross-sectional studies....It appears that the most intellectually able people increase their learning ability more rapidly during childhood and adolescence, reach a higher plateau later in young adulthood, and then either continue to increase gradually or maintain learning ability during adulthood.<sup>63</sup>

One factor that can greatly reduce the learning capacity is some physical or mental illness. Yet, even in these

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<sup>62</sup>Alan Knox, Adult Development and Learning (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1977), 7-8.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 417.

situations, adults continue to learn informally as they adjust to their changing situations and limitations.

Perhaps the greatest single influencing factor on continued adult learning is the desire to learn. "At any age the learning ability depends more upon wanting to learn than chronological age."<sup>64</sup> There is a need to encourage this desire for learning in people of all ages. Educators both within the church and in secular society need to motivate people in the desire for continuing education. This is a positive need for individuals of all ages as they prepare themselves for the future, regardless of age.

As people grow older, rather than becoming a burden to themselves and others, they can experience new opportunities of meaningful involvement and sharing together in an ongoing process of education. Robert King, in his doctoral thesis, gives this quote:

A key factor, then, in helping older people to delay senility and continue to develop themselves as active, participating members of their communities is an education. Through limited experience and some experimentation with educational programs for the aging, it has already been demonstrated that formal and informal programs of education can be used to prolong employment, develop new skills, combat senility, and promote physical and emotional stability.<sup>65</sup>

#### Lifelong Education Process Concluding Thoughts

##### Lifelong Educational Opportunities

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<sup>64</sup>Robert H. King, Identification of Educational Needs of Older Adults in Three Congregate Facilities: A Diagnostic Study (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1969), 9.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 36.

It is vital for the church today to assume a significant role not only to promote lifelong continuing education, but also to identify the needs of God's people in all stages of life and to address these needs through educational opportunities. The major goal of the Christian Church is, according to Paul Bergevin and John McKinley in their book Design for Adult Education in the Church, "growth in understanding of our relationship with God."<sup>66</sup> With an ongoing growth in one's relationship with God, there will also be a positive approach in relationships with one another within the Body of Christ. These are the first and second Tables of the Law or the summary of the Ten Commandments (Matthew 22:37 & 39). The educational process of the church on every level needs to have clearly defined goals and objectives so that the process serves as a means to the end and not the end in-and-of-itself. The desired long-term result of a growing relationship with God and with one another is the assurance of eternal life for all believers (John 3:16 & Matthew 28:19-20).

On a secular level people of all ages participate actively in what is "becoming a major movement to promote lifelong learning."<sup>67</sup> The secular world and its institutions of learning have recognized and promoted the

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<sup>66</sup>Paul Bergevin and John McKinley, Design for Adult Education in the Church (Greenwich, Conn.: Seabury Press, 1958), xxiii.

<sup>67</sup>Fred H. Harrington, The Future of Adult Education (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, Inc., Publishers, 1977), 5.

desire for adult continuing education. Harrington gives this basis for the need of more attention to adult education in the future:

Since adults now outnumber younger students and are the new majority in American higher education; and since lifelong learning is a necessity, not a luxury, in the modern age of technology and conflict; and since colleges and universities are increasingly involved, not only in teaching mature men and women, but also in helping solve their problems;...Therefore, it is clear that those who make the decisions in postsecondary education must pay more attention to adults in the future, in their own interest, in the interest of the adults, and in the interest of the United States.<sup>68</sup>

In November 11, 1991, Newsweek magazine, an article on aging gives this insight:

More and more retirees...are going back to college hitting the books instead of the golf links. In 1989, the Census Bureau's latest count, some 320,000 Americans age 50 and over were enrolled in college courses--including more than 65,000 at the graduate and professional levels. Thousands more are auditing classes, forming retiree study groups, attending university lectures and joining study-travel programs. The back-to-school boom has even turned some college towns into new retirement meccas....A few older learners are preparing for late-life changes; some are earning college degrees for the first time. But the vast majority are drawn back to school for the sheer joy of learning.<sup>69</sup>

Should not this also be a serious concern for the Christian Church in our world today? The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod is doing an excellent job in promoting pre-school and elementary Christian educational opportunities and a good job in advocating for Lutheran high schools and

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 211.

<sup>69</sup>Melinda Beck, "School Days for Seniors," Newsweek, 11 November 1991, 60.

colleges. Yet, in spite of some efforts in promoting post-confirmation Christian education, there has not been much success, at least on the local congregational level.

#### Promote On-going Nurturing and Faith Development

There needs to be a more effective approach in promoting this concept of on-going, lifelong Christian education. To accomplish this, Christian congregations must recognize that educating adults of all ages is also one of their fundamental responsibilities. Educators in the church need to be aware of the challenging needs and the stressful conflicts people deal with in their life's journey. A greater sensitivity for people's concerns must be realized with the acceptance that God's holy, inspired Word can give positive direction for life which the secular world cannot begin to provide.

Christian congregations concerned with reaching out to their adults need to expand and to improve their offerings in this continuing education process and provide for professional staff and trained laity to teach these classes. This will not only help growing Christians to become more involved in spiritual growth and witness but also provide for a better use of the talents and leisure time as older adults retire. And finally, to accomplish the above recommendations, congregations must give a greater priority for financial support to on-going Christian education. Congregations, especially those with Christian Day Schools,

often spend the greater part of their budgets on these schools with the result that too little is spent on the educational growth of God's people after Confirmation. It is not a matter of one or the other, but there is the need to realize that lifelong Christian education is a necessity for all ages.

The opportunities to move forward in this area of life-long Christian education confront the church today. The church with its too often traditional and parochial approach to the needs of the future must see the potential for the growth of God's Kingdom of Grace through continuing Christian education. The role of Christian education is to give God's people tools for personal growth and the ability to reach out to others with the life-saving Gospel message of Jesus Christ crucified and risen. That is a positive and exciting challenge which confronts the Christian Church, especially, the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. With God's guidance this challenge of a lifelong Christian education process can be met.

Its purpose is to instill awareness of God's purposes, acquaint individuals with the history of God's activity, and to instruct members in matters relating to the Christian faith. Equally important is the opportunity Christian education provides to express faith as one learns. This encourages growth as each individual shares insights and experiences that are drawn from actively bringing faith to bear on the events of daily living. Such a process enables Christian faith to grow and mature. Continual exposure to the Scriptures and experiences of believers of all ages add to the dimensions of faith, displaying new facets with each

glimpse of God at work.<sup>70</sup>

In view of this concern for lifelong Christian education, this Major Applied Project will proceed to focus on the need to involve older adults in this educational process.

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<sup>70</sup>Stewardship and Aging: Helps for Congregational Leaders (Chicago: Commission for Financial Support, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), 10.

CHAPTER III  
FOCUS ON OLDER ADULT "REPOSITIONING"  
IN THE CHURCH

Challenging Older Adults in the Education Process

God has given to His church on earth thousands of older adults whose life experiences and Christian commitment along with the gift of time can serve as a rich resource for the building of God's Kingdom of Grace. Often the church has neglected this resource or used it only in part. Very often congregations have a ministry to and for older adults, but a ministry by and with older adults is often lacking. There is an opportunity not only to serve older adults but also to challenge and educate older adults to use their time and talents in service to others.

In the Wheat Ridge Foundation study already in 1966, it was found that the older adult "needs to be a part of his congregation; can serve the church, if the church serves his needs; and needs a social outlet, which can most logically be given through the congregation."<sup>71</sup> George Barna in his book, The Frog in the Kettle, makes the following statement:

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<sup>71</sup>Oscar Feucht, Open Doors for Older Persons (St. Louis: Board of Parish Education, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1966), 2.

We must begin to rethink ministry to older adults....As a first step toward effectively ministering to the new elderly, we must reshape our concept of what it means to be elderly, implanting a more positive vision of that age segment.

Programs at the church must acknowledge that the senior citizens of tomorrow will be more physically vigorous, more interested in adventure and experiences and more involved in continuing education....

Many churches will have to stop thinking of the elderly as a group to be ministered to, and see them as one of our most critical groups of lay ministers....it is imperative that churches recognize seniors desire to be active participants in ministry, as in all other realms of their life.<sup>72</sup>

The concept of learning as a lifestyle is also noted by Ken Dychtwald.

What the late twentieth century has begun to give us is the prospect of many more years before the arrival of old age. The effects of this great gift will ripple through our lives in many unexpected ways. With more leisure time in our lives, we will tend to seek out deeper experiences that are more exotic, that teach us more about the world and ourselves, that satisfy more of our own needs, and that make us more useful in satisfying the needs of others.<sup>73</sup>

Eugene C. Bianchi, Associate Professor of Religion at Emory College, states that the aging process can be a time of growing old with meaningful faith and creative usefulness.<sup>74</sup> Ongoing Christian education can give spiritual meaning and service opportunities to people of all ages.

James E. Birren, Executive Director of the Ethel Percy

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<sup>72</sup>George Barna, The Frog in the Kettle (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1990), 206-207.

<sup>73</sup>Dychtwald, Age Wave, 170-171.

<sup>74</sup>Bianchi, 209.

Andrus Gerontology Center and Dean of the Leonard Davis School of Gerontology at the University of Southern California makes the observation that there are three factors that contribute to the quality of later life: "The pragmatics of health, income, and housing; opportunities for contacts with friends and family and for socialization; and opportunities for growth and creative expression of component abilities."<sup>75</sup> The church community has the ability to give positive input into all of these areas if it is willing to meet the challenge of providing an effective older adult ministry.

The Church as a Caring Community  
for the Whole Person

A Ministry to the Whole Person

The Bible emphasizes a ministry to the whole person. The Old Testament Hebrew understanding sees a person as a total being without soul-mind-body divisions. The creation of Adam in Genesis 2 is an example of this whole person concept, as Kenneth C. Haugk writes:

...God created Adam like a caring artisan, forming him from dust. God then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and Adam "became a living being" (Gen. 2:7). The picture of a statue-like corpse of a human, motionless and lifeless, suddenly gaining life and breath with personality, emotion, and coordinated movements is awe-inspiring. It also shows that the first person was incomplete until the physical element

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<sup>75</sup>Robert Butler and Herbert Gleason, eds., Productive Aging (New York: Springer Publishing Co., 1985), 35.

was united with the breath of God.<sup>76</sup>

But then came the brokenness of sin which affected mankind spiritually, emotionally, and physically. There was a broken relationship with God and with man. Wholeness in this broken relationship was anticipated in the Old Testament in the coming Messiah.

This wholeness of body, soul, and spirit was evident in Jesus' ministry and His concern for people. His concern was for a relationship of unselfish love (agape) and harmony (peace) between God and man and between man and man (Matthew 22:37,39). Just as Jesus met people where they were at in their needs (Matthew 25:35-38 and Luke 10:29-37), so also the Christian community with caring relationships meets people at this point of their individual needs. Today congregations need to reach out with a caring concern for people of all ages, helping them to find meaning and fulfillment in their God-given lives.

David Ludwig, who is on the Standing Committee for Health and Healing in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, makes this statement in regard to spiritual well-being in relationship to God and man.

Spiritual well-being is a process that engages the Christian in a vital relationship with God, an affirmation of self as a gift of God and loving

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<sup>76</sup>Kenneth C. Haugk, Christian Caregiving: A Way of Life (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 62.

relationships with others.<sup>77</sup>

#### A Biblical Perspective

The church, following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, has a Biblical responsibility to provide a caring community and caring relationships which can touch the whole person in every life situation. The caring Christian community also recognizes the fact that some needs are ultimately more important than others. The greatest need, which alone can give people purpose and meaning for this life and for eternity, is living in a forgiven relationship with a loving Lord Jesus Christ. Our hope for ultimate meaningfulness does not take place by what we accomplish or do not accomplish, but by what we experience through the working of the Holy Spirit. Haugk puts it this way:

Part of the unique nature of Christian hope lies in its origin. The responsibility for Christian hope is not yours, but God's. Paul speaks of unbelievers as "having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). Our hope is intimately bound up with God. To have hope solely in human capacities is to despair. Neither you nor I can fix the mess we're in as imperfect human beings in an imperfect world. So, one distinctive aspect of Christian hope is that it comes from and rests securely in God.<sup>78</sup>

This is true for people of all ages.

In focusing on a ministry by, with, to and for older adults, the Bible again gives some basic direction.

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<sup>77</sup>David Ludwig, "Spiritual Well-being: A Vital Relationship with God," Cross and Caduceus, 36 (Fall 1990): 6.

<sup>78</sup>Haugk, 147.

Chaplain Martin Brauer wrote:

The challenge of being old and of ministry with the elderly is to recapture the sense of meaning for living which God as Creator and Christ as the Redeemer has in mind for all of his people.<sup>79</sup>

Brauer then goes on to share what he calls "the pilgrim's path and their journey home." This will serve as a Scriptural summary and perspective.

The Pilgrim's Path:

1. God created all people to bear His image: Isaiah 60:21; Genesis 1:26.
2. God's image is that He loves without reservation: I John 4:7-8.
3. Age in no ways alters or even lessens this intention for His people: Psalm 92:12-15 (especially the R.S.V. and N.I.V. versions).
4. The life and well-being of every person is to be cherished by all: Psalm 8:3-8; Genesis 9:6; James 3:8-10.
5. Sin has worked havoc with this image, flawing-even-destroying God's design: Psalm 51:3-5; 90:7-9; 71:9-18; Eccl. 12:1-2.
6. In Christ, the Creator redeems all people and all of life to restore them to Himself: John 10:10; II Cor. 5:15-16; Eph. 2:10.
7. All of life has now a new and fruitful purpose: Rev. 21:3; Luke 2:29-32; Psalm 92:12,15.
8. Life pressed on relentlessly steadily toward fulfillment: Phil. 3:13; Eccl. 3:1-2, 12:6-7; James 4:13-15.
9. The elderly have unique gifts to share with their children and younger generations:
  - a. The wisdom of their years: Deut. 32:7; Job 15:10.

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<sup>79</sup>Older Adult Ministry (St. Louis: Board for Social Ministry, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1988): 1.

- b. Living hope that replaces fleeting wishes: I Cor. 13:4-7.
  - c. A vision of what is yet to be: Luke 2:25; Phil. 1:20-26.
  - d. All people are mortal (also you): I Kings 19:4; Psalm 89:48.
  - e. Giving, not having, is being at its best: Luke 12:32-34.
10. Old age can be active, reflective, celebrating, sabbath of life: Ps. 37:25; Prov. 16:31; Eccl. 3:22; Eccl. 11:8.
  11. Death is time for fulfilling all of life: II Tim 4: 6-8; Job 5:26.
  12. Resurrection is beginning of life forever: John 11: 35-36; Rev. 7:9; I Cor. 15:20-23.

This Biblical posture affirms God as the source of...

1. the love of Jesus Christ, given unto death for us;
2. life as a gift, in all its stages, having worth, meaning, and purpose, integrity and uniqueness;
3. hope for growth, change, creativity, and victory in and through pain, suffering and death;
4. freedom and responsibility to choose, to act, to care, and to love;
5. the fellowship of faith for worship, devotion, nurture, study, and ministry;
6. the caring community of concern and love, witness, and mutual services among the old, young, and middle-aged;
7. the heritage of tradition, of Word and Sacrament and ritual, of discipleship, law and history.<sup>80</sup>

With this basis the local congregation can be seen in several ways. First of all, it is called to be a caring community which exemplifies the servant model of Christ Jesus as Lord. Secondly, the local congregation is one of

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 1-2.

the few remaining intergenerational organizations in our society. Thirdly, older adults within the church often have more trust and confidence in the ministry of the church.

Congregations can become more powerful caring communities as they are gathered together and strengthened through Word and Sacrament. Within the caring community of the church, people of all ages must be valued as children of God, sharing together their joys and sorrows, their successes and failures, their time and talents. It is necessary to note that older adults desire the same responsibilities and the same services as do people of any age. The greatest need is to have the security and the challenge of a relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Bonhoeffer once suggested that the church was "Christ existing as Community."<sup>81</sup> St. Paul, in Ephesians 4:15-16, reminds all believers that Christ is the Head of the body (His Church).

Instead, by speaking the truth in a spirit of love, we must grow up in every way to Christ, who is the head. Under his control all the different parts of the body fit together, and the whole body is held together by every joint with which it is provided. So when each separate part works as it should, the whole body grows and builds itself up through love.  
(Today's English Version).

By the working of the Holy Spirit, a congregation can be the unique place where every person is valued and needed, and

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<sup>81</sup>Blaine Taylor, The Church's Ministry with Older Adults (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 27.

every person is able to love and be loved. Part of the uniqueness of the Christian congregation is the uniqueness of each individual member, each with different gifts and abilities and skills. Within this context people of all ages have the opportunity to be appreciated and to be involved in ministry to the glory of God.

CHAPTER IV  
OLDER ADULT MINISTRY PROCESS MODEL  
DYNAMICS AND SETTING  
Dynamics of Model

To provide a concrete and practical model for Older Adult Ministry in a Christian congregation, this Major Applied Project will illustrate an educational process which may be used to activate and challenge older adults. The goal is to provide for them a greater awareness that they are valuable and important members in a Christian congregation. This educational process model will need refinement as it is used in various congregations according to the needs of the congregation and the older adults in that congregation.

The greatest concern is that older adults, especially those who are not presently active in the life and functioning of the congregation outside attending worship services, gain an understanding that Christian education and growth is a life-long process. With that understanding, it is the goal to help older adults realize they can still make a valuable contribution to their congregation and to the work of the Lord and in the process, gain purposefulness and satisfaction.

### Learning Models

In this process consideration is given to the needs and the related interests of older adults as well as helping them to discover and to meet their needs and the needs of others with whom they interact. The goal is to help older adults see how they can, in a meaningful way, fit into the Christian community as more useful and complete persons. It happens too often that a church family loses sight of the individual as a person or that the individual is less important than the group. Each individual is important within the church family, regardless of age. St. Paul emphasizes the fact that the believer has a special calling. In Romans 8:28 (NIV) he writes, "...all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose."

This purposeful calling of God shows itself in the meaningful use of God's blessings to people. In Romans 12:6, Paul writes, "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them." The secondary goal is to help aging Christian congregations discover the untapped resources available to them from the older adults of the congregation. To accomplish this, it is vital to have older adults involved in a learning process where they share in an active learning experience, rather than simply listening to someone tell them what they need to know and

should be doing.

In providing a direction for involvement of older adults in the learning process, it is important to acknowledge the fact that many adults, especially older adults, are more familiar with the pedagogical model of education.

The pedagogical model assigns to the teacher full responsibility for making all decisions about what will be learned, how it will be learned, when it will be learned, and if it has been learned. It is teacher-directed education, leaving the learner only the submissive role of following a teacher's instructions.<sup>82</sup>

The assumptions about learners in the pedagogical model places the teacher as the transmitter of information, and the children are receptors. (See Appendix D for the Pedagogical Model Assumptions.) While the pedagogical model is relevant for children and youth, it becomes a less desirable model as a person grows older.

The problem is that the culture does not nurture the development of the abilities required for self-direction, while the need to be increasingly self-directed continues to develop organically. The result is a growing gap between the need and ability to be self-directing, and this produces tension, resistance, resentment, and often rebellion in the individual.<sup>83</sup>

With these concerns in mind, a more practical way to involve older adults in the learning process is through the andragogical model rather than the pedagogical model of

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<sup>82</sup>Malcolm Knowles, The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species (Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1984), 52-53.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 53.

education. (See Appendix E for the Andragogical Model Assumptions.) Eduard C. Lindeman's The Meaning of Adult Education in 1926 brings in this basis for the andragogical model.

In short, my concept of adult education is this: a cooperative venture in nonauthoritarian, informal learning, the chief purpose of which is to discover the meaning of experience; a quest of the mind which digs down to the roots of the preconceptions which formulate our conduct; a technique of learning for adults which makes education coterminous with life and hence elevates living itself to the level of adventurous experiment. (Gessner, 1956, p. 160).<sup>84</sup>

The basic assumptions for the andragogical model differ from the pedagogical model with the teacher becoming a facilitator, and the learner taking responsibility for the learning experience. These two learning models can be summarized as follows: Pedagogy is better applied to children, and andragogy is more applicable for adult learning.

Leon McKenzie in his book, Christian Education of Adults, gives ten statements which also put adult religious education into perspective.

1. The initial step of program development (curriculum development) is applied research that gains information from prospective learners about their educational needs and interests.
2. Adults should be invited to help the religious education program.
3. Adults should be invited to help the religious educator to implement and administer the educational program.
4. Adults should be invited not only to provide evaluations of the educational program but should also

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 30.

- be involved, as is feasible, in the planning of program evaluation.
5. In the instructional setting adults must be respected as adults.
  6. In the instructional setting adults should be encouraged to be proactive rather than reactive.
  7. In the instructional setting, depending on the specific instructional objectives and the content of the instruction, adult learners may be resource persons for learning as well as learners.
  8. As regards the explicitly religious message of the church, adults must be given choices and options relating to which aspects of the message interests them.
  9. Adult religious education, if it is responsive to adult needs, is a form of service.
  10. Adult religious education, if it is responsive to adult interests, can contribute to the formulation of community.<sup>85</sup>

The goal of the andragogical approach is to help adult learners take responsibility for their own learning process. This goal hopefully will result in the learner understanding his or her own needs more clearly and then be motivated to have those needs filled. This will not only help to promote a greater desire for lifelong Christian education as the first part of this project paper illustrated, but it will also help those who are older to understand that they are vital in the continued growth of God's Kingdom, thus giving them a greater sense of purpose and meaning.

#### Gifted People of God

From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:16, (NIV).

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<sup>85</sup>Leon McKenzie, Christian Education of Adults (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, Inc., 1982), 129-132.

It is not the purpose of this project to analyze spiritual gifts, given only to baptized and believing Christians. Spiritual gifts, however, do play a part in the community of believers as God's people of all ages are called to fit together and give support to the Body of Christ, His Church. God blesses His people to be a blessing. The purpose of helping people understand that the Holy Spirit does "enlighten me with His gifts" is vital to the health of the church.<sup>86</sup> (See Appendix F for a "Biblical Foundation.")

St. Paul in I Corinthians 12:1-7 writes:

Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant....Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good (NIV).

Dr. Walter W. Stuenkel defined spiritual gifts in this way:

They are special attributes distributed by the Holy Spirit according to His will and grace to all members of the body of Christ for mutual edification of the entire body.<sup>87</sup>

Although there is no command in the Holy Scriptures to discover spiritual gifts, there is the command to serve. Often the command to serve the Lord and His Church involves the same special abilities connected with exercising

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<sup>86</sup>Luther, 15.

<sup>87</sup>Walter W. Stuenkel, A Lutheran Approach to Biblical Picture of Spiritual Gifts, 1.

spiritual gifts. If a Christian, regardless of age, can be involved in serving God and His Church, he often discovers his or her spiritual gifts. When God's people are working together using their individual gifts and abilities, then, as St. Paul writes in the fourth chapter of Ephesians, "...when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love" (vs. 16 NIV). Every Christian is a member of the body of Christ and has certain spiritual gifts with which he/she can make a positive contribution to the healthy functioning of the Body of Christ. Every believer is expected by God to use responsibly the gifts along with the time, talents, and treasures entrusted to him/her.

#### The Setting for this Process Model

The motivational and learning model proposed in this Major Applied Project is a joint effort of an Older Adult Task Force at St. John Ev. Lutheran Church in Plymouth, Wisconsin, along with Mrs. Julie Zersen, the Continuing Education Director at Concordia University--Wisconsin, and the author, Pastor Dennis W. Pegorsch, the Administrative Pastor of St. John Congregation.

St. John Lutheran Church is one of seven congregations in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod that was selected in 1989 to develop a model of Senior Ministry by, with, to, and for older adults in the 55 plus age category. (See Appendix G.)

The model to be described in this project paper was developed and implemented between 1990 and 1993. Once again the intent was to help older adults become aware that they are important and can play a vital role in the congregational life. Their involvement can also help reach out more effectively to the community.

Presently there are other older adult action-oriented activities and programs functioning at St. John. These include a "Caring Visitation Committee" which is made up of older and retired members who visit other homebound or hospitalized members, a "Transportation Committee" which provides transportation for members for needed transportation, a "Telephone Prayer Chain", the monthly newsletter "Fellowship Group" which compiles the congregational newsletter, a "55 Plus Fellowship" group which sponsors dinners for new members and holds other fellowship/social activities, and an "intergenerational volunteer program" which works with children in the Christian Day School with individualized instructions. The involvement of older adults in the above-mentioned activities is a blessing both for the congregation and for those older adults involved.

St. John Ev. Lutheran Church

The Community Setting

The community of Plymouth, Wisconsin, is located in Sheboygan County (East-central Wisconsin), 53 miles north of

Milwaukee and 142 miles north of Chicago. Plymouth has a population of about 7000 people which serves a large rural and agricultural region.

Manufacturing and cheese producing, processing, and packaging form the core of the industrial enterprises which employ several thousand men and women. The farming region surrounding the city is devoted to dairying and associated feed and grain production plus vegetables and fruit.

Recreational opportunities exist in and around the community. Three spring fed lakes are within ten miles and Lake Michigan is only 15 miles away. A ski hill and both indoor and outdoor swimming pools are available in Plymouth. The northern Kettle Moraine State Forest provides hiking trails, down hill and cross-country skiing.

There are four public elementary schools, a junior high school and a senior high school enrolling a total of 2400 students in Plymouth. The two parochial elementary schools, St. John Lutheran and St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic, enroll approximately 500 students. The Lake Shore Technical College provides vocational and technical education. The University of Wisconsin-Sheboygan County Campus and Lakeland College are local campuses within 15 miles. There are the usual community organizations such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Toastmasters, the Optimist Club, Jaycees, VFW, American Legion, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and other church, school, and community organizations.

In 1977, Plymouth observed its 100th anniversary as a city. It began as a pioneer settlement in 1845. The first settlers, Henry P. Davidson and his son Thomas, came from Connecticut. In those days a wagon trail connected Sheboygan and Fond du Lac with the Plymouth area. Over the years the community has been settled mainly by persons of German and other Northern European ancestry, many of them moving here from upper New York State.

#### A Brief History of St. John Congregation

The beginning of St. John Congregation dates back to the year 1855, when Pastor Steinbach of Trinity Lutheran Church in Sheboygan held services once a month in a school and farm house between Plymouth and Sheboygan Falls. He left in March of 1859 to accept a call to Milwaukee. The Plymouth, Sheboygan Falls and "Buffalo Settlement" south of Waldo united and called Pastor Ernst Rolf, age 21. Before he arrived, it was decided that a church be built in Plymouth. The church was dedicated on January 16, 1859.

Pastor Rolf left in 1860, and he was followed by Pastor Edmund Multanowski (1860-1862). In 1864, under Pastor Friedrich Ottman (1863-1872) a Sunday School and Christian Day School were begun. Other Pastors were Pastor Jacob Hoffmann (1873-1878), Pastor J. Herzer (1879-1892), Pastor William Matthew (1893-1895), Pastor H.F. Proehl (1895-1910). English worship services were introduced under

Pastor Martin Schmidt (1911-1941). He was also instrumental in beginning the Plymouth Community Hospital. Following him were Pastor Herbert Baxmann (1941-1963), Pastor Ave-Lallemant (1944-1946), Pastor G.A. Karpinsky (1947-1973), Pastor Robert Bernhardt (1963-1970), and Pastor Robert Wudy (1971-1981). The present Pastors are Dennis W. Pegorsch who has been with the congregation since 1974 and Thomas R. Burton who became Associate Pastor in 1982. Since 1983 the congregation has also had vicars serving the parish.

A brief history of the physical facilities are as follows:

- 1858 - First church building erected.
- 1865 - First school building was purchased.
- 1868 - A new building was erected for the Christian Day School.
- 1891 - Dedication of the present church building.
- 1955 - Dedication of the present Christian Day School.
- 1977 - Remodeling and large addition to the school.
- 1978 - Remodeling and addition to the church building.

The congregation supports a Christian Day School with an enrollment of about 240 students, Junior Kindergarten through eighth grade, served by 16 staff members under the direction of Principal Theo Harks.

#### Theological Orientation

The congregation is theologically conservative, but it is open to new ideas which make for a more effective building up of the Body of Christ and reaching out into the community. It is located in a conservative but forward looking community which is growing about 2% a year.

### Worship Style of the Congregation

The congregation has used the "new hymnal", Lutheran Worship, since 1981. As in most congregations, there was a mixed reaction, but it is now fully accepted. The congregation is traditional in its worship, but it is open to a variety of worship experiences. There is an acceptance of lay readers and youth-led services. Four worship services each weekend provide opportunity for variety. During the summer months a midweek worship service is added which is very informal in nature. This meets the needs of those who are out-of-town on weekends and those who desire a more informal service with greater lay involvement. The Lord's Supper has become an important part of the majority of the worship services. Overall there is still a more formal nature to the worship which emphasizes the traditional Lutheran heritage and music. At the same time an effort is made to provide for more openness and a feeling of community in the worship services.

### The Size of the Congregation

Presently there are two pastors, a vicar, a part-time Director of Outreach, and a very part-time youth director serving the needs of 2811 baptized members and 2188 communicant members.

The composition of the congregation is fairly well-balanced. The makeup of the congregation is 47.9% male and

52.1% female. (See Appendix H for the composition of membership.) With this brief introduction and picture of St. John Congregation a better understanding of the process model will be evident.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ENABLING PROCESS MODEL

This process model is developed with the understanding that possible refinements will be needed. These refinements will be the result of the evaluation process used in the development of this model and the circumstances of the congregation using the model.

The desired results of this model are to identify the common interests and needs of older adults at St. John Lutheran Church in Plymouth, Wisconsin. This concern revolves around the ability of the congregation to provide a meaningful ministry by, with, to, and for older adults. Presently, 24% of the members of St. John are 55 or more years of age. This is the "targeted group" used.

The procedure in gathering a study group for the process model began with accessing from the computer a listing of the membership within the 24% category of those 55 plus. These are then divided into three categories: ages 55 to 64, 65 to 74, and 75 and over. The group chosen for this study is taken from the 65-74 category since most people in this category are retired but are still very active and are looking for meaningful and positive opportunities to be involved. From this group, those, who

are in nursing homes or are shut-ins are deleted. For the sake of this process model, those who are presently active in congregational and community activities are also eliminated. The concern is to help those who are not involved to understand their role in the congregation.

The total number of members in the 65 to 74 age group was 234 people. The number after the deletion process is approximately 150. A random sample of every other person within this group was chosen to be invited to this study group which results in 75 invitations. (See Appendix J for the sample letter to this invitation.)

The sample group is asked to respond with their interest in the study group, or their declination within two weeks. A follow-up phone call is made to those who do not respond after the two week period for their response. The result is that 15 people responded positively. To facilitate discussion, it was felt that the ideal group size desired for each study group is 12-18. Those who are willing to be involved are asked to make a six month commitment to meet once per month (with a suggested time of 10 to 11:30 AM on a weekday morning). The ideal time is determined by the study group after the first session.

The purpose of the process model will be to evaluate the needs and interests of older adults and to study (brainstorm) possibilities of future ministry by, with, to, and for older adults within the congregation and the

community. The purpose also has the intention of involving those in the study group in activities according to time, interests, and talents or spiritual gifts.

With this procedure in place the six sessions are set up with a number of assumptions suggested by Julie Zersen.

They are as follows:

1. Older adults have basic needs as do all people.
2. One of those basic needs, perhaps the most important, is to feel needed.
3. Older adults represent an era where a job needed to be done and a person was asked/required to fill that need, qualified or not.
4. Commitment was taken seriously and for often long periods of time.
5. Because we've been in a "youth oriented society", older adults have often been made to feel as though they should "let the younger generation take over."
6. Because older adults are living longer and we are no longer a "youth oriented society", older adults are needing to be called back into service, as the Scriptures always intended.
7. Attitudes in society and the church have developed in a negative way toward the older adult and need to be changed.
8. People have become specialists in areas of "volunteering" and have begun to say, "It's not my bag!". In the church we have referred to this attitude as a knowledge of one's spiritual gifts. The older adult needs to be introduced to this concept.
9. People of all ages need to be sensitive to the aging society/church we've become and the problems/possibilities it presents.
10. Through the rather simplistic process - but one that is time-consuming by the church's standards, persons could come to appreciate their worth to the church and community and be fulfilled by "doing what they do best."

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PROCESS MODEL SESSIONS

#### Outline of the Sessions

- Session I      Sensitizing to Issues/Impact on Church  
(at large/specifically)
- Session II     Discovering Needs of St. John Based on the  
Seven Functions of the Church  
(the concept of the "collective vision")
- Session III    Prioritization of Needs
- Session IV     Focus on Interests, Talents, and Gifts of  
Individuals
- Session V      Gifts from God to be USED (blessed to be a  
blessing)
- Session VI     Fitting NEEDS and GIFTS Together

The following pages of this chapter will provide an outline of the content of each session.

## SESSION I: SENSITIZING TO ISSUES/IMPACT ON CHURCH

Purpose: To help the older adults at St. John Lutheran Church understand that our nation has become an aging society, that this impacts the church at large, and more specifically St. John congregation and finally, them.

Objectives: To help older adults to see the world today as different from the world in which their parents were a part. To understand and accept that because of this different world, the church also is a different world and the needs of the people are different.

To look at St. John congregation specifically and see what these different needs are, and how they might be addressed.

Presentation:

A. Devotion: "Ten Rules for Happier Living"

1. Give something away (no strings attached)
2. Do a kindness (and forget it)
3. Spend a few minutes with someone in need
4. Look intently into the face of a baby (and marvel)
5. Laugh often (it is life's lubricant)
6. Give thanks (a thousand times a time is not enough)
7. Pray (or you will lose the way)
8. Work (with vim and vigor)
9. Plan as though you will live forever (because you will)
10. Live as though you will die tomorrow (because you will die on some tomorrow)

(Source unknown)

The devotion is to give a foundation for the task before the group, emphasizing God's guidance and blessing in every task we undertake with His help as we continue to grow.

- B. Setting: The group is in a round table setting. There are a number of objects (antiques, etc.) from their past in the middle of each table for them to identify and reminisce about.
- C. Approach: The objects are to be identified as a group sharing process. This promotes interaction and a feeling of being part of the group.
- D. Motivation: As the objects are identified, characteristics of the past can be suggested. Each age has a definite uniqueness, and it is important to re-think who we are, especially as it relates to the group as an older adult population (example: more leisure, health care issues, more money, better health, more educated, etc.).
- E. Teaching Strategy:  
Lecture-discussion strategy is used on the first part of the outline. Small groups can be used to begin the focus on needs of St. John. Introduction outline:
  - I. The Aging of America
    - A. Society/Business World
    - B. Your Life vs. Your Grandparents'
      - 1. Objects
      - 2. Uniqueness Today

- C. Impact on the Church
    - 1. Different Needs
    - 2. Different Programs/Organizations
      - a. "Throw Away" World
      - b. Package Differently
    - 3. Different Leaders - Parish Nurses, Directors of Christian Education, Ministers of Discipleship, and others.
    - 4. Different Expectations
- II. How Do We Prepare for the Aging of the Church
- A. Look at Other Congregations - Examples
  - B. Look at St. John, Plymouth
    - 1. Needs
    - 2. Programs to Fit Needs - "Throw Away"/ Package Differently
    - 3. Equip People for Programs
      - a. Seminary
      - b. Workshops
      - c. Institutes
      - d. Retreats
- III. Your Role
- A. The Model - "Collective Vision"
  - B. The Commitment
    - 1. Willingness to Attend Six Sessions (one per month at mutually agreeable time)
    - 2. Willingness to Share Concerns (both negative and positive) and Needs of Older Adults
  - C. Assignment for Next Session - be Positive
    - 1. Be a Detective - Listen to Complaints and Concerns and Needs of Other Older Adults
    - 2. Within 72 Hours of This Session, Note Three Complaints, Concerns or Needs
    - 3. Share results at Next Session
- IV. Evaluation Form (to be filled out by each one attending before you leave today)
- 1. Are you glad you came today?
    - Yes! Because...
    - No! Because...
  - 2. Did you want to come today?
    - Yes! Because...
    - No! Because...

3. Was this a typical church activity?  
Yes! Because...  
No! Because...
4. What did you enjoy most?...
5. What did you enjoy least?...
6. Did you learn anything new? If so, what?...
7. Are you willing to commit yourself to working together in this group for 6 months?  
Yes                      No                      (Circle one)
8. Other comments...

F. Closing Prayer and Thought:

"No Wonder I'm Tired"

There are 240 million people in America.  
One hundred million are over 65.  
Ninety million are under 21.  
This leaves 50 million people to do the work.  
But 18 million are in the armed forces.  
This leaves 32 million to do the work.  
But 6 million are on welfare.  
This leaves 26 million to do the work.  
But 15 million work for the government.  
This leaves 11 million to do the work.  
But 10 million are in school.  
This leaves 1 million to do the work.  
But 750,000 are sick or disabled.  
This leaves 250,000 to do the work.  
But last week 249,998 people were in jail.  
This leaves 2 people to do the work.  
And since you don't do much,  
No wonder I'm tired.

(Source Unknown)

## SESSION II: DISCOVERING NEEDS

Purpose: To look at St. John specifically in relationship to seven functions of the church with a "collective vision" that enables older adults to see needs that are or are not being met.

Objectives: To help the older adults to see that in the areas of worship, witness, stewardship, health, nurture, fellowship, and service, there are needs that are not being met in all aging categories.

To reflect on the needs that the church is already meeting with the vision to give new format/"wrapping" to those programs.

To awaken each to the possibility that with each member contributing time, talents, and treasures to St. John congregation, it could become a church with a sign in the community that would read, "For everything you need, turn here!"

Presentation:

- A. Devotion: "I Thank God for You!" Philippians 1:3-11  
The joy emphasizes the blessing we could be to each other, to our church, and to the world as we continue to grow in our faith relationship to Jesus.
- B. Setting: The group is in a round table setting. There

is coffee, tea, and hot chocolate available along with baked goods. There is a sign which reads, "For everything you need, turn here!" (Meeting preparation...a mailing is to be sent to each group member reminding them of the date of the meeting and the assignment from the first meeting.)

C. Approach: The concepts from the previous session are reviewed which pertain to -

- a different world, different church
- different needs - to give or to take
- people "Doing what you do best!"
- "collective vision"

D. Teaching Strategy:

The approach in this session is a presentation and discussion of the seven different functions of the church. This provides a forum for the complaints, concerns, and needs from their "detective work" assignment from the first session. The Mission Statement of St. John Lutheran Church and School is reviewed as a reference point for the seven functions of the church. To stimulate creative thinking, there is the sharing of creative ideas and programs being used in other congregations and denominations as possible ways to creatively meet needs in aging society. The outline is as follows:

I. The Mission Statement of St. John Congregation  
(Review Discussion)

"The purpose of St. John Ev. Lutheran Church is to make disciples as the Holy Spirit empowers us to share the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ with all people, and bring them into an ongoing, caring, and sharing faith relationship in the Body of Christ."

The basis of our purpose is to fulfill the Great Commission and make disciples both in quantity and quality (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:45-48, John 20:21-23, Acts 1:8, 16:5). The goal is to lead our members to become spiritually responsible and mature Christians committed to glorifying God, building one another within the Body of Christ, and reaching out to the lost people of our community and our world.

St. John congregation in ministry and mission seeks to C.A.R.E. by...

Cultivating people within the Gospel (Ephesians 4:11-13)

Activating the inactive (Luke 22:32)

Reaching out to the unchurched (Matthew 28:19)

Enjoying the fruits of Christian fellowship  
(Acts 2:42, Romans 12:4-5)

The concern of the professional and lay leadership is that God calls His people at St. John to be about the work of our Heavenly Father. To accomplish this task of caring and sharing, God calls upon every member from the youngest to the oldest...no one is excluded as members working together, using their God-given gifts and abilities, to fulfill the Great Commission of making disciples and incorporating them into the Body of Christ.

## II. Presentation Outline on the Seven Functions of the Church

Look at St. John with the kind of vision based on the sign "For everything you need - turn here!"  
Lead a discussion and sharing of concerns and needs as they relate to the seven functions of the church, especially as they relate to older adults.

### A. Worship - How Can More Meaningful and Spirit-filled Worship Be Provided for Older Adults?

Examples from Discussion:

1. Readers
2. More Special Music

3. A Funeral Choir
  4. Shut-in Tape Ministry (Audio and Cable TV)
  5. Caring Visitations
  6. Readers Theater Approach during Advent and Lent
  7. Familiar Hymns
  8. Large Print Hymnals and Orders of Service
- B. Witness - How Can There Be a Better Christian Witness in the Congregation and Community?

Examples from Discussion:

1. Visitations of Members and Non-members in Nursing Homes
  2. Be a Positive Example Giving Witness to the Congregation with Their Personal Involvement
  3. Be Friendly
  4. Relational Witnessing to Family and Friends
  5. Articles in Newsletter with Testimonies of God's Blessings
- C. Stewardship - How Can Good Christian Stewardship Be Promoted among and by Older Adults and for the Congregation in General?

Examples from Discussion:

1. If You Have Nothing to Give but Yourself, What Impact Could You Have?
  2. Choose People for Positions, according to Their Talents, Time, Interests, and Gifts
  3. Older Adults Relate to those Younger How God Has Blessed Them
- D. Health - Biblical Concern for Body, Soul, and Mind...How Can Older Adults be Impacted and How Can They Help Others?

Examples from Discussion:

1. Parish Nurse (Wholistic Health: Body, Soul, and Mind)
  2. Health Care Committee
  3. Seminars on Living Wills and Related Subjects
  4. Home Visitations of Older Adults by Older Adults
- E. Nurture - How Can More Nurturing Be Implemented?

Examples from Discussion:

1. Congregation in General...Caring,

Encouraging, Helping, etc.

2. Inter-generational Activities with Older Adults in Sunday School, Christian Day School, and Vacation Bible School

- F. Fellowship - How Can Good Christian Fellowship Be Provided for Those Who Really Need It?

Examples from Discussion:

1. Development of New Groups to Meet Varying Interests/Needs of People of All Ages
2. Fellowship Meals During Advent and Lent
3. Organizations with Different Objectives Providing Fellowship
4. Assimilation of New Members of All Ages
5. Congregational Dinners and Fellowship Activities

- G. Service - How Can People, Especially Older Adults, Be Helped Do What They Do Best?

Examples from Discussion:

1. Help People Learn to Know What They Can Do Best?
2. Job Descriptions for Church Volunteer Positions
3. Help People Develop Sense of Ownership by Their Involvement in the Church
4. Provide more Opportunities for Service in the Church and the Community
5. Intergenerational Activities
6. Encouragement for a Job Well Done

This activity can be easily facilitated by using newsprint and listing activities as they are shared in the group. The suggestions and recommendations can be printed up for distribution and further study for implementation of the priorities.

- E. Closure: To have each older adult prioritize the areas of need before the next session and be ready to share this with the group. To find ways to increase an awareness of needs to others in the congregation -

members/leaders. There is no formal evaluation in this session outside of the opportunity to share questions or concerns at the end of this group session. A closing prayer is shared, giving thanks to God for one another.

## SESSION III: PRIORITIZATION OF NEEDS

Purpose: To help older adults realize that the church must continue to strive to meet all the needs of all the people all the time, knowing that it's an impossibility. Prioritizing becomes necessary in such a process until every member is awakened to use his/her talents and time in helping to meet the needs.

Objectives: To help each older adult to become objective in prioritizing what the immediate needs of the congregation are.

To help older adults come to the realization that all the needs cannot be met, including some of their needs.

To write a goal statement for every need established.

To list the obstacles/supporting forces that would make each goal possible/difficult to achieve.

Presentation:A. Devotion: "Freedom to Find Yourself"

We all wear masks....One of the marvelous things that Christ did for everyone who came to follow Him was to remove their masks....There was no reason to go on pretending....With God's acceptance of us in Christ, we are free to find ourselves....We are free to be who God intended us to be when He made us. "If the Son sets you

free, you are free indeed." (John 8:36)

B. Setting: The group is in a round table setting.

Sheets of newsprint are placed on the walls with one function of the church on each sheet. Each person in the group has a list of the functions from the previous meeting before them. Coffee, hot chocolate, and baked goods are available.

C. Approach: Review the concepts from the previous session

- "Collective Vision" in a different world
- "For everything you need, turn here!"
- "Doing what you do best!"
- Seven functions of the church

D. Teaching Strategy:

Ask the group to go around to each function (listed below) and prioritize on newsprint on wall with red (first priority) and blue (second priority) dots based on the needs they see at St. John. The purpose is to have the group identify the greatest areas of need which call for more immediate attention, since it is not realistic to deal with all the areas of concern at the same time. Those functions which receive the least number of red and blue dots from this process group, are set aside with the goal of ending up with three areas (functions) of priority. Next the group looks at the positives (those things which are already being done well) and at the negatives (those things which need attention) under the three top priorities chosen. The

positives can be referred to as "grease", since they function smoothly while the negatives are "gum", since they impede the functions being reviewed. In working through the issues, many opportunities can be presented for discussing problems and possibilities.

I. The Seven Functions of the Church to Be Prioritized

- A. Worship
- B. Witness
- C. Stewardship
- D. Nurture
- E. Fellowship
- F. Service
- G. Health

The desired outcome is to discover what are the areas of greatest need as perceived by this process group of older adults. To deal with all seven areas would present an overwhelming task for follow-up.

II. Process of Prioritizing the Seven Functions of the Church as to the Most Important Needs Seen by the Older Adults in the Group

- A. First Step...Elimination in Priorities, Narrow Down to Five Functions
- B. Second Step...Elimination in Priorities, Narrow Down to Three Functions
- C. Third Step...Set Goals for Remaining Three Functions...with "Gum" (Negatives) and "Grease" (Positives)

III. Example of Negatives and Positives in Three Chosen Functions: Witness - Nurture - Stewardship

- A. Witness
  - 1. Goals
    - a. Equipping People to Witness

- 1) Relational
  - 2) Lifestyle
  - 3) Verbal
  - 4) Non-verbal
  - b. Change Attitudes within Ourselves to See Needs Close to Us, as well as Farther Away
  - c. Show People that Witness is more Than Knocking on Doors
2. "Gum" (Negatives)
- a. Apathy
  - b. Too Busy
  - c. Lack of Commitment
  - d. Discomfort
  - e. Don't Want to be Focused On
  - f. Incapable
  - g. Takes Too Much Time
3. "Grease" (Positives)
- a. Getting over Initial Hump Makes It Easier
  - b. Happy Faces...in Setting Up and Modeling the Program
  - c. Child-like Faith within Each
  - d. Bible-oriented Church - Trust God's Promises
  - e. Be About our Father's Business
  - f. Already in Process/Just Not Aware of our Witness
4. Practical Application Possibilities
- a. Workshops
    - 1) Formal Approach
    - 2) Lifestyle Approach
  - b. Intergenerational Witnessing and Sharing
  - c. Emphasis on Evangelism in Worship Services and Bible Classes
  - d. Commitment to God's Work as Witness to Importance of Christ within Life of Individual(s)
  - e. Invitation to Neighbors, Friends, Co-workers, Relatives to Come to Church/Bible Study/Activities with You...Especially with Friendship Sunday Emphasis and/or Open Houses
- B. Nurture
1. Goals
- a. Assess Needs in Congregation that Deal with Single Parent Families, Older Adults, Singles, Blended Families, Traditional Families, Anyone of All Ages

- b. Help Parents See Nurturing Needs of Their Children
  - c. Sensitizing Younger People to Nurturing Needs of Older Adults in Confinement
  - d. Emphasize self-nurturing
2. "Gum" (Negative)
    - a. People Don't Like to Reveal Their Needs
    - b. Ageism - Negative Being Older in our Society
    - c. Self-sacrifice
  3. "Grease" (Positives)
    - a. Everyone Needs to be Nurtured
    - b. Opportunity
    - c. Our Lives Making a Difference in Helping Others
    - d. Parents are Aware Their Kids have Unmet Needs
    - e. Warm Fuzzy Positive Relationships
    - f. Everyone Wants Support
    - g. See Results
- C. Stewardship
1. Goals
    - a. Defining the Needs
    - b. Help People Prioritize Time, Talents and Treasures
    - c. Help People to Assess Talents/Gifts
    - d. Give People OK to Go in Different Directions in Ministry as You Age
  2. "Gum" (Negatives)
    - a. Getting People's Attention/Listen
    - b. Dollar! - Turnoff
    - c. Hostility
    - d. Indifference
    - e. Don't Have Time, Talents, Treasures
    - f. Fear of Commitment and Involvement
    - g. Not Want to Change Ways
  3. "Grease" (Positives)
    - a. Day and Age of Self-Everything (Discovery)
    - b. People are Looking for Direction
    - c. People Want Their Life to Make a Difference
    - d. People are Looking for New Involvement
- E. Closure: Provide opportunity for sharing of concerns and questions regarding group process. Assure the group

that input from them will be shared with appropriate Boards and Committees of the congregation for review and action. Again there is no formal evaluation, but an assignment is given. Each older adult in the group is given an envelope addressed to the group leader or pastor asking them to write out and describe how they pictured themselves in "volunteer" situations throughout their lives from early childhood to the present time. This should be returned to the group leader or pastor within one week after the session. The session concludes with a prayer.

SESSION IV: FOCUS ON INTERESTS, TALENTS AND GIFTS  
OF OLDER ADULTS

Purpose: To help older adults to focus on themselves, to see who they are and what they have to offer with an understanding of their interests, talents, and spiritual gifts.

Objectives: To reinforce from the "collective vision" concept that older adults still have something to offer no matter what age.

To help them understand that this is a directive from the Scriptures.

To help them discover what they do best, thus avoiding "burn out"; instead using their talents and gifts to be renewed and "rekindled" in the Lord and His will for their lives.

To help them realize a balanced life requires "giving".

Presentation:

A. Devotion: "Our God-given Gifts" I Corinthians 12:11

The devotion sets the tone on the fact that the Holy Spirit gives different spiritual gifts to each person. These gifts need to be identified within our lives and used for the building up of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-31).

B. Setting: The group is in a round table setting. A sign is set up which again reads: "Doing What You do

BEST!" Coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and baked goods are available.

- C. Approach: With the group's permission, discuss the assignment of the personal evaluation (how they pictured themselves in "volunteer" situations throughout their lives from early childhood to the present time). Do the letters or evaluations talk about the gifts and talents of individuals and what they feel they do best or what needs to be done?

Review concepts from previous sessions:

- Collective Vision - "Doing what you do best"
  1. Older adults needed by the church
  2. Older adults have gifts and talents and interests
  3. Older adults need to identify gifts/talents
  4. Older adults need to be in service
- Discover the church's needs
- Prioritize the church's needs
- Set goals based on needs

TODAY: Look at ourselves  
 - who we are...  
 - what we have to offer...

NEXT MEETING: Look at needs

Look at our gifts

How do they tie together?

- D. Teaching Strategy:

Presentation/Discussion involving the group.

Why do anything - why not "I've done my thing, let others do it now"?

In the past people didn't talk about their gifts/

talents, rather they just worked together, doing what needed to be done. Today we hear people so often say, "That's not my 'bag, let someone more talented than I am do that." Today society is more tuned in to doing what we feel we do best (age of specialization on all levels).

The Scripture references for the group study are as follows:

1. Philippians 2:13 - "For it is God which works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure."
2. I Corinthians 12
3. Romans 12
4. Ephesians 4

Gifts - people's importance in a group...each of us is unique and important to the Lord and to each other.

Concerns:

1. Need confirmation from the group that you can use their gifts.
2. Tasks today cannot be designed for long range (people not ready to make "until death do you part" commitments).
3. Gifts are received, not achieved.
4. Fruits of the Spirit are also a blessing, but different from gifts (Galatians 5:22,23).

The next exercise for this session is the administration of a spiritual gifts inventory. The ideal is to take

time in the group session rather than having them do it on their own at home. There are two spiritual gifts inventories that are recommended for use with this session, although others are also available. Two are recommended:

1. "Discovering Your Gift(s)"  
Chapter Three of Personal Renewal Study  
"His Love/Our Response" Stewardship Series  
Department of Stewardship and Financial Support  
St. Louis: The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1884  
(See Appendix J)
2. "Spiritual Gifts Analysis"  
St. Paul Lutheran Church  
2567 Nichols Dr.  
Trenton, Michigan 48183  
(See Appendix K)

After the inventory or analysis is completed, it can be self-graded. The members of the group are to take the survey home for their personal review and reflection. They are to bring it along with them for the next session.

- E. Closure: Think about the needs of St. John congregation and our community which have been previously discussed and relate them to your personal involvement in helping to meet those needs.

Think about a mission statement for your life.

- Do you have one?
- What would it be?

Be prepared to deal with the needs of St. John, your gifts, and how they tie together.

The session ends with a closing prayer.

## SESSION V: GIFTS FROM GOD TO BE USED

Purpose: To give each older adult the understanding that gifts given to each was a gift from God and was expected by God to be used in His Kingdom work.

Objectives: To look at Scripture references pertaining to the various spiritual gifts and understanding the possession and use of the gift(s) to be between each individual and God.

To confirm the gift within themselves.

To confirm the gifts of each other, when possible.

Presentation:

A. Devotion: "Unopened Packages - Unused Gifts"

1. Begin by acting on the belief that God told the truth; He placed gifts in every Christian.
2. Unwrapping the packaging means developing, in members, a lifestyle of dependent obedience (dependence on Christ's power and obedience to Christ's will). (I Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4:4-16, Matthew 28:18-20, Galatians 2:20, and John 15:5)
3. Discovering the spiritual gifts of members, is, in fact, discovering the details of God's plan for churches.
4. Exercising spiritual gifts is, in fact, implementing God's plan for His church to reach out to one

another and the world with the saving Gospel message of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Remember: "Unopened packages = undiscovered gifts = unused gifts= unfulfilled Christians = impoverished churches = Churchianity, the religious counterfeit of Christianity."

Source: Howard Bell, NewService: Ideas and Information to Help the Local Church Make Disciples, Vol. 15:1. (San Bernardino: Churches Alive!)

- B. Setting: Chairs set in circle with tables pushed aside so that a closer feeling can be established. Coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and baked goods are available. Sample memo sent to group members reminding them of the session as follows:

Dear Member of Christ's Body:

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The last session provided us with the opportunity to take the "Spiritual Gifts Analysis". We pray it was a helpful experience for you, especially as you have had an opportunity to review it and relate it to your life. Please bring your analysis along to our upcoming session on \_\_\_\_\_ at 10 AM. in the Sacristy. We hope you can attend so we can look at where we can go in encouraging our congregation, especially our older adults, to see that they are vital in the building up of God's Kingdom here at St. John and in our community.

Your assignment was to think about and add to the lists of needs existing here at St. John. Think about a "mission statement" for your life - do you have one? What would it be? In other words, do you feel your God-given opportunities in life are related to your personal goals as you live each new day? Be prepared to deal with the needs at St. John, your gifts, and how they tie together. Thank you very much for being a part of this study group. God be with you and bless you!

Your brother in Christ,  
Pastor Dennis W. Pegorsch

- C. Approach: As each gift is shared and defined, group members are asked to look up pertinent Bible passages for the gift(s) under discussion.
- D. Teaching Strategy:
1. Have each share their gifts - either:
    - a. One at a time or
    - b. Take in categories
  2. How do you feel about your gifts -
    - a. Did they confirm what you already know?
    - b. Were you surprised at the outcome of the analysis?
    - c. Other reactions?
  3. Mission statement for your life -
    - a. Do you have one?
    - b. What would it be?
  4. Is St. John providing opportunities for you to use your gifts and talents?
  5. Do you need new opportunities to think about?
  6. If so, how would your list that was developed fit in?
  7. Would you be willing to make a commitment for the next six months (more or less at your discretion) to be involved in some area of congregational life based on your interests and gifts?
  8. (Evaluation) Has this process been helpful to you in giving more meaning and purpose to your life as a Christian, a member of this congregation?
- E. Closure: Consider how your spiritual gifts (from the analysis) can fit into the present opportunities at St. John. Determine if some opportunities need to be added to make use of your talents and gifts. Take a look at the need priorities earlier and determine how persons with your gifts could be useful in providing those needs.

## SESSION VI: FITTING NEEDS AND GIFTS TOGETHER

Purpose: To help older adults to understand that since they have more than one gift, a shift can be made and choices can be made to be involved in new or new-old opportunities; the process being for each to take a look at the possibilities available or possible and see how and where their gifts fit in.

Objectives: To assess periodically what one is doing with their talents and determine if a change needs to occur. To be able to look at the possibilities that exist in the congregation for them to be fulfilled.

To be able to look at possible opportunities that don't exist at the present time, but that might be possible.

To make a commitment to be involved regardless of age.

Presentation:

A. Devotion: "Little Things Mean a Lot...."

Luke 8:42b-48 "Your faith has made you well."

Luke 21:1-4 "Poor widow and two copper coins."

Little things do make a difference. It is the little things, the ordinary things, that bring change to individuals, or that come to symbolize change. And that which brings change to the individual, brings change to the world.

God would change the world through us...our faith, our

gifts and talents, our time and energy.

1. Kind words
2. A warm greeting
3. A lesson learned
4. Letters to read
5. Small talk and listening
6. A promise kept
7. Respect for self...respect for others

"You aspire to great things? Begin with little ones."  
St. Augustine

Drops of water,  
grains of sand -  
with time and unrelenting persistence  
carve monuments in stone  
no human effort can match.

So with our lives -  
the fleeting thoughts,  
the momentary inspirations,  
the beauty seen  
the verse read  
the smile given  
the hurt ignored  
the harshness unsaid  
the small disciplines and tiny joys from a life,  
mould a character that outlasts  
all the monuments of time.  
Roy Nunley

- B. Setting: The group is in a round table setting. There is coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and baked goods available. Former newsprint sheets are taped to the walls with the seven functions of the church, new-old opportunities, and the three main areas of need the group felt are paramount in the congregation.
- C. Approach: Review and summarize the past sessions and

what has been accomplished.

Develop process based on needs..."Need to feel needed in the church"...new members and old members alike...every age.

D. Teaching Strategy:

Discussion and review of the process...

1. Uncover needs in your congregation based on the seven functions of the church.
2. Center on individual gifts - to indicate something still worthwhile in older adults.  
Example: Past...grew up in era: "Do a job to get it done!" Today: "Do a job that is your 'thing'."  
"Do what you do best!"
3. Confirm your God-given gifts.
4. List old opportunities in gift areas.
5. List new ideas (based on three most important functions of church chosen by the group) with specific suggestions for action.
6. Determine - which of old opportunities appealed to group individuals.
7. Determine - which of new opportunities appealed to group members now.
8. Through consensus of group: how would you proceed from here?
  - a. Individual involvement?
  - b. Group involvement?
9. How can this group process (6 month commitment) be used to help others in this congregation (or in other congregations)?

E. Closure: In evaluation and closing this final session the following questions were asked:

1. Did this process have any effect on gaining a better understanding of yourself and your spiritual gifts?

2. Did this process have any effect on gaining a better understanding of your congregation and its needs?
3. Could this process for learning be implemented for others, especially older adults?
4. What would you change to improve the process?
5. How would you be willing to help with continuing this learning process for others?
6. How can this process be implemented more effectively?  
(indicate steps or creative ideas).

If group members do not have sufficient time to complete the evaluation during the session, they should return it to the church office within three days of this final session. The goal of this learning model is to provide an ongoing opportunity and process for growth for older adults at St. John Lutheran Church in Plymouth, Wisconsin. This process can be revised according to the needs of group utilizing the process and the congregation.

The session is closed with a group prayer and the Lord's Prayer.

### Concluding Remarks

The process model outlined on the preceding pages is an attempt to determine where some of the older adults are in their thinking and to help them understand their importance in the ministry of the church. The goal is to involve more of the older adults in the ongoing work of the congregation.

This is in keeping with the objectives of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's objectives to develop a stronger older adult ministry. The objectives as set forth by the synodical Board for Social Ministry Services are as follows:

1. To affirm older adults as gifts of God.
2. To enable older adults to use their gifts in service to the church and community.
3. To demonstrate daytime older adult ministries featuring the multifunctions of the congregation (Worship, Witness, Nurture, Fellowship, Service, Stewardship, and Health).
4. To enhance ministry by, with, to, and for older adults within the congregation and the community.
5. To re-establish ministry to aging persons who were formerly active.
6. To minister spiritually to the unchurched within the community.
7. To provide additional congregation-based, older adult ministry models.
8. To emphasize not just growth in numbers, but the wholistic (spiritual, physical, and social) growth of individuals.<sup>88</sup>

The success of these objectives is vital to the church and to older adults, especially when present statistics show that 50% of Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod members are 55

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<sup>88</sup>Older Adult Ministry: Church Growth Grant Projects (St. Louis: Board for Social Ministry, 1989), 1.

years or older. This nation is growing older due to a declining birth rate and people living longer.

There is an urgent challenge to the church-at-large to enlist the older adults who have so much to offer for the continued growth of God's church. They have two precious gifts they can share, time and experience. Since many older adults are retired or semi-retired, they have more discretionary time to offer in a serving and witnessing ministry. The culmination of their years of experience can provide greater understanding and wisdom for ministry.

Older adults have a more global view of life, as compared to their earlier years of a more narrow focus centered on raising a family and the work-world. This more global view often prompts people to assist and care for their church and community. There is a need for Christians of all ages to use their time and talents wisely, even after retirement. The Lord God Almighty is to be praised for there is so much talent, so many spiritual gifts, and so much experience and wisdom in our members who are 55 and older. With the help of the Holy Spirit God's Kingdom will be built up by God's people sharing their lives together as they grow in oneness and commitment to Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VII  
SUCCESSFUL AGING: AN INVITATION  
TO CONFIDENT LIVING

God has given His church a challenge to do ministry by reaching out with the love of Jesus Christ to one another and to the world community. The number of older adults (48 million over 55) compels the American society and the Christian Church to shed old images and stereotypes which currently prohibit millions of older adults from sharing their time, talents, gifts, experiences, and wisdom for new and exciting ministries, as opposed to merely "passing time" for 20 or 30 years during retirement.

Aging or Growing

The title for this chapter is taken from an article written by Ross Larson in the July, 1992, issue of The Clergy Journal. The question Larson asks is "How can our faith community image successful aging as invitation to confident living?"<sup>89</sup> There is a need to rid society of the negative stereotypes of getting older, which often prevent older adults from being the people God still intends them to

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<sup>89</sup>Ross Henry Larson, "Successful Aging: An Invitation to Confident Living," The Clergy Journal LXVIII, 8 (Seymour, Ind.: Graessle-Mercer Company, July 1992), 16.

be.

The fear of aging is ubiquitous, exercising its negative impact on all of life, robbing persons of hope, creating harmful stereotypes, separating generations. It is a disease of modern society. It mesmerizes the innocent with a prospect of deterioration and meaninglessness, destroying anticipation and denying the faith of all who would declare life to be a gift of God. If the future is all down hill, then what can creation mean? If our end is to be in despair, then how do we proclaim salvation? Is redemption only to be otherworldly? Is life no more than a temporary burden?<sup>90</sup>

Rather than focusing on the negative, God calls His people to live confidently, one day at a time, with a sense of purpose and hope. To accomplish this, there is the need for God's people of all ages to understand that God calls them to be in service to God and to one another, using the blessings with which God blesses them. The Christian community can "offer an invitation to confident living" by helping people of all ages understand that they are important to God and are called to fulfill a lifelong calling which involves a "cradle-to-the-grave" learning, growing, and serving process. (See Appendix L for the Christian Education Concept.) This is the concern for lifelong Christian education which enables God's people to be better equipped for service in God's Kingdom. This is the intention of the continuing education process model found in the Major Applied Project. Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it."

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

When the fears of aging can be replaced by a positive lifestyle of confident living with a focus on God's will for His people, there can then be a sense of contentment and purposeful living even in old age. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe gave the following thoughts on contented living:

Nine Requisites for Contented Living

Health enough to make work a pleasure;  
Wealth enough to supply your needs;  
Strength enough to battle with difficulties...;  
Grace enough to confess your sins and overcome them;  
Patience enough to toil until some good is accomplished;  
Charity enough to see some good in your neighbor;  
Love enough to make you to be useful and helpful to others;  
Faith enough to make real the things of God;  
Hope enough to remove all anxious fears concerning the future.<sup>91</sup>

"Growing old gracefully" is a sign of confident and contented living which enables older adults to grow old but have a continued sense of purpose.

Aging is a part of living which begins at birth for all people. Throughout life the enjoyment of God-given gifts and being a good steward of them is vital to live life in a positive way. Dr. Herbert I. London, dean of the Gallatin Division of New York University and senior fellow of the Hudson Institute suggests four universal conditions to deal with change in a positive way.

"4 Healthful Conditions for Dealing with Change"  
 1. Accept the inevitability of change.

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<sup>91</sup>Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Nine Requisites for Contented Living," quoted in The Autumn Leaf: 32 (Milwaukee: Washington Park Senior Center, Sept.-Dec., 1973), 1.

2. Respect the past and learn from it.
3. Be willing to adapt.
4. Believe in yourself and the future.<sup>92</sup>

"Without these conditions," says Dr. London, "change can be disabling. With them, it can be invigorating, even ennobling."<sup>93</sup> Aging is constant for all people, but active growing and learning is a lifelong process which can bring new life and challenges for both young and old. This is God's will for the aging and growing Christian. Hopefully, all believers can follow the example of Jesus as recorded in Luke 2:52, "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

This growing "in wisdom and favor" is reflected on by St. Paul in Ephesians 4:12ff:

to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. . .we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined, and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds up in love, as each part does its work (NIV).

As a believer places trust in Christ, he/she can grow old, not just age, giving support and receiving support from other believers who make up the Body of Christ, His Church.

#### Repositioned to Serve

Just as we can't help it if the sun shines or the wind

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<sup>92</sup>"Aging Can Be Invigorating," Correspondent (Appleton, Wisconsin: Aid Association for Lutherans, Winter, 1993), 23.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

blows or the rains come, so also we can't prevent growing older. Wrinkles develop, bodies become stooped and bent. This can't be prevented. Yet something can be done about attitudes toward aging, and something can be done to prepare or reposition for the sunset years of life.

In their book, The Best Half of Life, Ray and Anne Ortlund wrote these words:

...if you are a child of God's, His blueprint for you is more exciting and fulfilling than you can dream. You're just one little human life, but God will catch you up into eternity. His plans for you are so vast and important. Whatever your age, now is the time to believe that God has a future for you and to cooperate with Him by getting stars in your eyes, in looking up, in letting His plans become yours.

"I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)<sup>94</sup>

Regardless of age, today is the first day of the rest of your life. The question of God's purpose for the lives of His people, even in old age, needs to be asked as the rest of life is lived out. In the Old Testament Joshua said to the children of Israel:

Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you (Joshua 3:5 NIV).

What does God have in store for His people, even for older adults?

Once again with St. Paul, God's people are called upon to "be renewed in the attitude of your minds" or as the Revised Standard Version of the Bible reads: "to be renewed

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<sup>94</sup>Ray and Anne Ortlund, The Best Half of Life (Glendale, California: Regal Books Division, GIL Publications, 1976), 12.

in the spirit of your minds" (Ephesians 4:23). It is an established fact that people can acquire new knowledge and learn new skills after forty, fifty, and even eighty years. Retirement is simply an opportunity to get on with the rest of life and meet new challenges in service to God and others.

Just as childhood schooling is a preparation for adulthood, so also careers and vocations of adulthood can become a stepping stone for retirement. People are in the process of repositioning themselves throughout their lives, and this does not stop at retirement or in old age.

Walter W. Stuenkel in an article entitled "Meeting the Challenge of Aging" gives five brief statements of Biblical principles for a spiritual approach to life even in old age.

All of life is an aging process, and the aging can move through life courageously, facing grief, disappointment, pain, and even death, if they have faith in Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord (Rom. 8:31-39).

Every day of life in this world places a challenge before the aging to make it a day of blessed service in gratitude to a gracious God (Phil. 4:6-13; Acts 9:6; Prov. 3:1-18).

Old age is not a vacation but rather a continuing vocation to use one's respective spiritual gifts to God's glory (I Peter 4:10-11). Living in and by God's grace, aging people can still accomplish great things for God in this world (Eph. 2:8-10; II Cor. 12:6-12; Job 5:26).

Elderly Christians have much to offer the rest of the body of Christ (Prov. 16:31; Ps. 37:23-27), and Project Age Well will challenge them to make the most of their God-given opportunities.

Although heaven is a blessed "rest for the people of God," aged Christians must be led to look forward to heaven as a continuing opportunity of happy, active service before God's throne (Rev. 7:15; Phil 1:23-26;

Rev. 19:5-7)..<sup>95</sup>

Older adults have the opportunity to think of life as a continually meaningful existence which involves both time and eternity. Life should not be compartmentalized with a time for childhood, for adolescence, for maturity, and for old age. Instead each stage of life should prepare people for the adventure in the next stage. The point of connection for all of life is an ongoing, healthy spiritual life. As spiritual life is cultivated, it brings older adults to an understanding of the fundamental meaning behind all of life's activity. All of life is a gift of God, and all of life has meaning as people live it out. Every day is an opportunity which God has given people to find out more about life than was known the day before. Happiness in old age, or at any age, depends not on age or on position, but on people themselves.

By looking up and ahead, and by planning wisely, changes can be accepted as they occur. Each phase of life has its own blessings. As the future becomes the present, planning in partnership with God will fulfill the need for security, recognition, belonging, meaningfulness, and new experiences. In this process the will of God becomes more important, and the things of this world have less meaning. Instead of looking backward in regret, older adults can look

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<sup>95</sup>Walter W. Stuenkel, "Meeting the Challenge of Aging," The Lutheran Witness (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, February, 1989), 9.

forward in anticipation for God's action in the lives of His people. Not only is the believer renewed by the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus, but it is through Christ all things work out for good. St. Paul writes in Philippians 3:13,14:

But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

The Living Bible in Proverbs 16:9 states, "We should make plans, counting on God to direct us."

Have you deliberately stretched your imagination to project, as best you can, what is probably coming in your life? Only then will you know clearly what to do and what not to do. You'll be "positioned for the future."<sup>96</sup>

Older adults, like people in every age category, are called to live with a sense of mission to which God called them. Every age group has its problems and difficulties, but God would guide and bless His people in their journey through this life. (See Appendix L for the Bible Study entitled: "A Pilgrim People and Their Journey Home.") The life of every believer on this earth can be viewed as a "middle time" between birth and the beginning of eternal life in heaven. (See Appendix M for the poem entitled: "Middle Time.") During this "middle time" there is a need to view life as an opportunity to keep moving beyond the accomplishments of the past, asking "What does God have in store for me today and tomorrow?" (See Appendix N for

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<sup>96</sup>Ortlund, 66.

"Retire to Serve.") Even in old age, God calls His people to be repositioned as a continuing resource to be a blessing to others, providing "a living witness to God's love and faithfulness."<sup>97</sup> This is the challenge God gives to older adults in His church family as the church plans, implements, and sustains an older adult ministry.

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<sup>97</sup>Robert W. Garmatz, Never Too Old (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 18.

## APPENDIX A

## SOME BIBLICAL REFERENCES PERTAINING TO OLD AGE

## I. Long Life

## A. Promised to those who follow God

Deut. 5:33; 11:21	Prov. 3:2; 9:11; 10:27
I Kings 3:14	Is. 65:22
Job 5:26	Zech 8:4
Ps. 91:16	Perhaps I Peter 3:10-12, although long life not specifically mentioned

## B. Examples of Long Life

Gen 5:1-32; 9:29; 11:11; 25:7	II Sam. 19:35
Deut. 31:2; 34:7	I Chron. 29:28
Josh. 24:29	Job 42:17
I Sam. 4:15; 12:2	Luke 2:36

## II. Old Age

## A. General references

Gen. 15:15	Eccl. 12:1
Ps. 71:9	Is. 46:4
Prov. 16:31	Titus 2:2-3

## B. Examples of vigorous old age

Deut. 34:7  
Josh. 14:11  
Luke 2:36-38

## C. Indications and problems of old age

## 1. Gray hairs

I Sam. 12:2	Eccl. 12:5
Job 15:10	Hos. 7:9
Prov. 16:31; 20:29	

## 2. Feebleness

I Kings 1:1	Zech. 8:4
Ps. 71:9	Heb. 11:21
Eccl. 12:5	

## 3. Dimness of vision

Gen. 27:1; 48:10  
I Sam. 3:2; 4:15  
Eccl. 12:3

## 4. Old age to be revered

Lev. 19:32	Prov. 23:22
Job 32:6	I Tim. 5:1-2

## APPENDIX B

## ARN MODIFIED SENIOR STRESS SCALE

Adult Age Life Event  
Rank

1. Death of a spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Move to retirement home	70
4. Marital separation	65
5. Death of a close family member	63
6. Major physical problems	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Realization of no meaningful faith for eternity	47
9. Financial loss of retirement money	47
10. Forced early retirement	46
11. Unable to maintain driver's license	45
12. Marital reconciliation	45
13. Retirement	45
14. Spouse confined to retirement home	45
15. Change of health of family member	44
16. Gain a new family member	39
17. Change in financial state	38
18. Death of a close friend	37
19. Difficulty getting medical insurance	36
20. Change in number of arguments with spouse	35
21. Mortgage over \$50,000	31
22. Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
23. Feelings of not being needed	29
24. Feelings of lack of purpose	28
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28
26. Wife begins or stops work	26
27. Revision of personal habits	24
28. Significantly less contact with the church	24
29. Significantly decreased contact with children/friends	24
30. Trouble with the boss	23
31. Minor physical problems	20
32. Change in recreation	19
33. Change in church activities	19
34. Change in social activities	18
35. Mortgage or loan less than \$50,000	17
36. Change in sleeping habits	16
37. Change in number of family get-togethers	15
38. Change in eating habits	15
39. Vacation	13
40. Christmas	12
41. Minor Law Violation	11

Win Arn and Charles Arn, "Are You Ready for the Age Wave?" Evangelism 4,4 (August 1990): 147,148.

## APPENDIX C

## Summary of Fowler's Seven Stages of Faith Development

**Primal Faith:** Prior to the events of birth itself, we have enjoyed one of the most remarkable of symbiotic relationships

....During the first year, the mutual tasks of the baby and those providing care involve bonding and attachment, as well as the generation of a trusting give-and-take....Primal faith arises in the roots of confidence that find soil in the ecology of relations, care and shared meanings that welcome a child and offset our profound primal vulnerability. (pp. 52-53)

**Intuitive-Projective Faith:** About age two a revolution begins to happen for the child. Language emerges to mediate relations to the world and others in new ways....The child, now able to walk freely and question everything, daily encounters novelties and newness....For now, stimulated by experience and by stories, symbols, and example, children form deep and long-lasting images that hold together their worlds of meaning and wonder....We see lively imagination grasping the world, endeavoring to give it unity and sense. The preschool child who has access to the symbols, stories, and shared liturgical life of a religious tradition awakens to an expanded horizon of meanings. (pp. 53-55)

**Mythic-Literal Faith:** At about the time a child starts to school, we see the beginnings of a new stage....Stable categories of space, time, and causality make the child's constructions of experience much less dependent on feeling and fantasy....the world becomes more linear, orderly, and predictable. Children in this stage routinely take the perspectives of others on matters of mutual interest, and they recognize others' perspectives as different from their own....Faith becomes a matter of reliance on the stories, rules, and implicit values of the family's community of meanings. (pp. 55-57)

**Synthetic-Conventional Faith:** We come now to a stage that typically begins to emerge in early adolescence....The key to our understanding the structure and dynamics of this stage is an appreciation for a revolution that adolescence typically brings in cognitive development. No longer is it (the mind) limited to the mental manipulation of concrete objects or representations and of observable processes. Now thinking begins to construct all sorts of ideal possibilities and hypothetical considerations....Formal operational thinking makes possible the generation and use of abstract concepts and ideals. It makes it possible to

think in terms of systems. And it enables us to construct the perspectives of others on ourselves - to see ourselves as others see us....This emergence accounts for the "self-consciousness of adolescence. It accounts for the rather sudden new depth of awareness and interest in the interiority (emotions, personality patterns, ideas, thoughts, and experience) of persons - others and oneself. It makes for a newly "personal" young woman or man. In this stage a person struggles with composing a "story of my stories" - a sense of the meaning of life generally and of the meaning and purpose of her/his life in particular....In this stage one is embedded in her/his faith outlook, and one's identity is derived from membership in a circle of face-to-face relations....The world view and sense of self synthesized in this stage and the authorities who confirm one's values and beliefs are internalized, and the person moves on through the life cycle with a set of tacitly held, strongly felt, but largely unexamined beliefs and values. (pp. 57-62)

Conjunctive Faith: The stage of faith that emerges from mid-life or beyond involves the integration of elements in ourselves, in society, and in our experience of ultimate reality that have the character of being apparent contradictions, polarities, or at the least, paradoxical elements....In this transition the firm boundaries of the previous stage begin to become porous and permeable....Conjunctive faith combines deep, particular commitments with principled openness to the truths of other traditions. It combines loyalty to one's own primary communities of value and belief with loyalty to the reality of a community of communities. Persons of conjunctive faith are not likely to be "true believers." In the sense of an undialectical, single-minded uncritical devotion to a cause or ideology.... They know that the line between the righteous and the sinners goes through the heart of each of us and communities, rather than between us and them. (pp. 64-67)

Universalizing Faith: Marked by the radical completion of two tendencies we have seen developing in the course of earlier stages. The first involves decentralization from self....the gradual qualitative extension of the ability and readiness to balance one's perspective with those others included in an expanding radius. It means "knowing" the world through the eyes and experiences of persons, classes, nationalities, and faiths quite different from one's own. A second dimension of decentration that comes to a radical completion in universalizing faith has to do with valuing and valuation....

We invest in or commit to values that give our lives meaning and value...Across the stages of faith development, as the boundaries and identity of the self undergo clarification,

each successive stage requires an expansion of the groups and interests whose valuing - based on their fears and anxieties about worth, significance, and survival - gradually become matters of our concern as well. This process reaches a kind of completion in universalizing faith, for there a person decenters in the valuing process to such an extent that he/she participates in the valuing of the Creator and values other beings - and being- from a standpoint more nearly identified with the love of Creator for creatures than from the standpoint of a vulnerable, defensive, anxious creature....

"Perfect love casts out all fear," as it says in I John 4:8. The transvaluation of values and the relinquishing of perishable sources of power that they are part of the movement to universalizing faith are the fruit of a person's total and pervasive response in love and trust to the radical love of God. (pp. 67-70)

James Fowler, Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984), 52-70.

## APPENDIX D

## Pedagogical Model Assumptions

1. The need to know: Learners only need to know that they must learn what the teachers teach if they want to pass and get promoted; they do not need to know how what they learn will apply to their lives.
2. The learner's self-concept: The teacher's concept of the learner is that of a dependent personality; therefore the learner's self-concept eventually becomes that of a dependent personality.
3. The role of experience: The learner's experience is of little worth as a resource for learning; the experience that counts is that of the teacher, the textbook writer, and the audio-visual aids producer. Therefore, transmittal techniques - lectures, assigned readings, etc., are the backbone of the pedagogical methodology.
4. Readiness to learn: Learners become ready to learn what the teacher tells them they must learn if they want to pass and get promoted.
5. Orientation to learning: Learners have a subject-centered orientation to learning; they see learning as acquiring subject-matter content. Therefore, learning experiences are organized according to logic of the subject-matter content.
6. Motivation: Learners are motivated to learn by external motivators - grades, the teacher's approval, parental pressures.

Malcolm Knowles, The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species (Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1984), 52-53.

## APPENDIX E

## Andragogical Model Assumptions

1. The need to know: Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it. Tough (1979) found that when adults undertake to learn something on their own they will invest considerable energy in probing into the benefits they will gain from learning it and the negative consequences of not learning it. Consequently, one of the new aphorisms in adult education is that the first task of the facilitator of learning is to help the learners become aware of the "need to know."
2. The learner's self-concept: Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives. Once they have arrived at that self-concept they develop a deep psychological need to be seen by others and treated by others as being capable of self-direction. They resent and resist situations in which they feel others are imposing their wills on them.
3. The role of the learner's experience: Adults come into an educational activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience from youths. By virtue of simply having lived longer, they have accumulated more experience than they had as youths....This difference in quantity and quality of experience has several consequences for adult education....For one, it assures that in any group of adults there will be a wider range of individual differences than is the case with a group of youths....Hence, the great emphasis in adult education is on individualization of teaching and learning strategies. For another, it means that for many kinds of learning the richest resources for learning reside in the adult learners themselves....The implication of this fact for adult education in any situation in which adult's experience is ignored or devalued, they perceive this as not rejecting just their experience, but rejecting them as persons.
4. Readiness to learn: Adults become ready to learn things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situations.
5. Orientation to learning: In contrast to children's and youths' subject-centered orientation to learning (at least in school), adults are life-centered (or task-centered or problem-centered) in their orientation to learning. Adults are motivated to devote energy to learn something to the extent that they perceive that it will help them perform tasks or deal with problems that they confront in their life situations
6. Motivation: While adults are responsive to some

external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries, and the like), the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life, and the like). Tough (1979) found in his research all normal adults are motivated to keep growing and developing, but that this motivation is frequently blocked by such barriers as negative self-concept as a student, inaccessibility of opportunities or resources, time constraints, and programs that violate principles of adult learning.

Malcolm Knowles, The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species (Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1984), 53.

## APPENDIX F

## Biblical Foundation

NOTE: The Biblical foundation for the deployment of spiritual gifts is established carefully in Chapter Six of the "The Personal Renewal Study." Please ensure that all of the HIS LOVE-OUR RESPONSE Team members have studied this chapter carefully.

## A. Why Study Spiritual Gifts?

1. The Bible teaches us about them (I Corinthians 12:1-3).
2. They are an integral part of "God's Master Plan" for His people--His Church (I Corinthians 12:4-7; I Peter 4:10).
3. The Body of Christ (the Church) is benefited when spiritual gifts are used (I Cor. 12:12-25).
4. God will call us to account for how we have used what He has entrusted to us (Matthew 25:14-30).

## B. What Gifts Does God Give?

1. God gives special people to the Church (Eph. 4:11) for the purpose of preparing God's people for service, i.e., equipping them to use the gifts God has given them.
2. God gives various gifts to each Christian as He wills (Rom. 12:6; I Cor. 12:11) for the purpose of serving other Christians (I Peter 4:10) and building up of the Body (Eph. 4:16).
3. Spiritual gifts that God gives to individuals are found in: Rom. 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:4-11; I Pet. 4:10-11.

## C. What are the Results of Discovering and Deploying Spiritual Gifts?

1. Each member will become more aware of how God can use His people in ministry.
2. Members will be able to work together in love and harmony (I Cor. 12:14-25).
3. Members will avoid pride, envy, or false humility (I Cor. 12:14-25).
4. The Body of Christ will mature (Ephesians 4:13).
5. As each "part" does its proper work (Rom. 12:4-5), the Body of Christ (the Church) is benefited (Ephesians 4:16).
6. God will be glorified (I Peter 4:11).

SUMMARY: Based upon these Scriptures, having each member of your congregation identify his/her spiritual gift(s) and deploying each of them in ministry on the basis of their gift(s) contributes to a properly working "body." Only through Word and Sacrament can a Christian reach his or her full potential for growth and service in the use of his/her spiritual gift(s). Moreover, Christ's Church cannot move forward in unity and harmony to its fullest potential to accomplish the Great Commission unless all the members of the Body are using their spiritual gifts together in love and understanding (I Cor. 13). It is important to understand that gifts are always given for the purpose of serving and upbuilding fellow believers, that is, the Church, and thus to accomplish Christ's mission in the world.

Deploying the Gifts: Follow-up of Personal Renewal Study (St. Louis: Department of Stewardship and Financial Support, LCMS, 1985), 2.



## APPENDIX G

# OLDER ADULT MINISTRIES PROJECT

(Sponsored by Lutheran Brotherhood)

BOARD for SOCIAL MINISTRY SERVICES  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road  
St. Louis, MO 63122-7295

NOVEMBER 1989

It has been four weeks since we met on October 23-24. Dr. Shirley Bergman, Director, Institute on Aging, Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska, presented resources available to us from the government, AARP and NICA (National Interfaith Coalition on Aging). She was followed by presenters who related church growth through older adult ministry to seven functions of the church - witness, stewardship, health, nurture, worship, fellowship and service. You may wish to refer to the handouts you received and to your own notes for your own personal review of these presentations as they may apply to the OA (older adult) ministry you undertake.

Your evaluations of this meeting/workshop indicated that you generally thought the presentations were quite useful and stimulating. You wished you had had more time to begin planning for the development of a more vigorous OA ministry in your congregation.

### PARTICIPANTS

#### Congregations

Tampa, Florida - St. John  
Linn, Kansas - Immanuel  
Mounds View, Minnesota - Messiah  
Warrenton, Missouri - St. John  
Roselle, Illinois - Trinity  
Houston, Texas - Trinity  
Plymouth, Wisconsin - St. John

#### Districts

Florida-Georgia District  
Kansas District  
Minnesota South District  
Missouri District  
Northern Illinois District  
Texas District  
Wisconsin South District

Representatives from the Montana, Minnesota North and Minnesota South districts were present as were members of Synod's Task Force on Older Adult Ministries, board member Edwin Trapp, and Eugene Bickel, staff member for aging at Concordia Lutheran Church, Kirkwood, Missouri.

### OUR GOALS

Our goal is to become models for other congregations in your district and nationally in realizing church growth through a ministry with, for and by older adults around the specific functions of the congregation.

Perhaps another way of saying this is - we want to seize opportunities and resources in our churches and communities so that older adults can lead quality lives, enhancing the spiritual, physical, mental and social parts of life through serving and being served. Then the church will also grow in and through its functions.

- Program 4. Provide resources and workshops for districts to enable congregations to use many more older people in ministry and mission
- Program 5. Encourage districts through synodical resolution to include aging committees as part of their structure
- Program 6. Recruit and train a cadre of older members on the national, district, and circuit levels for ministry and mission within the LCMS
- Program 7. Through synodical and district resolutions encourage the mutual cooperation and support of the church's social service agencies and parishes to help meet the social needs of older adults
- Program 8. Work with agencies and churches in numerous volunteer activities

**OBJECTIVE 6: DEVELOP AN ONGOING RESEARCH PROGRAM AMONG ALL GENERATIONS RELEVANT TO THE MINISTRY OF AGING**

Goal 1. Assess across the life-span the issues and concerns of aging

- Program 1. Through research to identify the needs and priorities for intergenerational issues and concerns at the various developmental stages of the life-span
- Program 2. Develop appropriate resource tools

**OBJECTIVE 7: ENCOURAGE THE SUPPORT AND TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS FOR MINISTRY WITH THE AGING**

Goal 1. Encourage and support districts and congregations in ministry of volunteerism

- Program 1. Continue to support and promote Project Compassion
- Program 2. Continue to support and promote the Stephen Series
- Program 3. Continue to support and promote the leisure ministry

**OBJECTIVE 8: ENCOURAGE SYNODICAL SUPPORT FOR AGING MINISTRIES**

Goal 1. Develop synodical funding for aging programs/activities

**OBJECTIVE 4: SHARE INFORMATION WITH THE CHURCH ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE WITH THE AGING**

Goal 1. Develop a clearinghouse process

Goal 2. Initiate a flow of information

Program 1. Identify a group that could serve as a clearinghouse

Program 2. Develop a process for establishing networks for sharing information with the church

Program 3. Produce a network/newsletter for communication inter-changes

**OBJECTIVE 5: ASSIST THE CHURCH IN A RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF MINISTRY WITH THE AGING**

Goal 1. Define the church's role in ministry with the aging

Goal 2. Provide models and planning resources for intergenerational programs

Goal 3. Establish an office on aging with professional staff trained and experienced in the field of aging

Goal 4. Increase the involvement of congregations and districts in the ministry with the aging

Goal 5. Encourage districts to establish committees on aging

Goal 6. Establish a cadre of older members on the national, district, and circuit levels for ministry and mission within the LCMS

Goal 7. Encourage the mutual cooperation and support of the church's social service agencies and parishes to help meet the social needs of older adults

Program 1. Sensitize the church to the implications of ageism through appropriate programs, beginning with the departmental representatives and staff of the International Center

Program 2. Begin intergenerational projects in ministry and mission with youth and older adults by providing models and resources

Program 3. Recommend to the Board for Social Ministry Services that they secure professional staff, trained and experienced in the field of aging

Program 6. Provide pre-retirement planning for professional workers

**OBJECTIVE 2: ENLIST THE CHURCH'S EDUCATIONAL SECTOR TO THE TASK OF MINISTRY WITH THE AGING**

Goal 1. Encourage and support synod's colleges and seminaries in educating for older adult ministry

Goal 2. Encourage and support the nurturing agencies of the church in providing a Christian understanding of the aging process

Goal 3. Recommend and encourage the development of a Department on Gerontology, Social Ministries division

Program 1. Assist in assessing current efforts by seminaries and colleges in equipping church leaders for ministry to and with older adults, providing support for further development

Program 2. Assist educational agencies of the church to assess current efforts to provide a Christian understanding of the aging process

**OBJECTIVE 3: GATHER INFORMATION RELATED TO THE EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES BEFORE THE CHURCH WHICH RELATE TO AGING MINISTRIES**

Goal 1. Identify needs of older adults

Goal 2. Survey the formal and informal structures which support programs for the elderly in the church and the community

Program 1. Stay current with the literature relating to the needs of older people

Program 2. Develop a needs assessments instrument to determine the needs of older LCMS adults

Program 3. Review programs being conducted by the districts, congregations, schools, and agencies relating to ministry with the aging

Program 4. Be in touch with other churches and organizations in the field of aging

Program 5. Maintain active membership in national, professional organizations, especially those giving leadership and direction to the role of churches in serving older members

TASK FORCE ON AGING  
TEN YEAR OBJECTIVES AND GOALS: 1990-2000

OVERVIEW

The Task Force on Aging was initiated by the Board of Social Ministry in 1984. The major challenge was and is that of planning for the next decade in the multi-faceted areas of aging.

The task is formidable because of the large number of retired adults who relinquish many of their church service roles. The opportunities are incalculable as the world has need of many more witnesses to the Gospel and other critical service areas of hunger, shelter and caregiving. In addition, this group is more self-reliant, healthier and wealthier than ever before in history. The opportunities and resources suggest why God has given to so many older adults ten to thirty years of life after their social security eligibility.

Our primary task is empowering a vision of engaging many older adults in service and ministry throughout their life spans. The task force has studied key areas and suggests the following:

**OBJECTIVE 1: HELP THE CHURCH TO UNDERSTAND BETTER WHAT IT MEANS TO GROW OLDER**

- Goal 1. Recognize the process of aging is part of God's plan for our continued growth
  - Goal 2. Implement resolutions 101-A (1983) and 7-03 (1989), which encourage a ministry to, for, by, and with older persons in our church
  - Goal 3. Recommend guidelines that help the church minister with older adults
  - Goal 4. Prepare statements on aging that give specific direction
  - Goal 5. Provide opportunities for learning in order to sensitize church professionals, church workers and lay leaders to ageism and gerontophobia
- Program 1. Identify church resources for ministry with the older adults
  - Program 2. Develop church resources for ministry to and with older adults
  - Program 3. Prepare documents/statements for the church's ministry with older adults
  - Program 4. Provide programs for a ministry to older adults on the synodical, district, and parish levels
  - Program 5. Present educational experiences and provide resources on aging for church leaders

## EVALUATION

Ernie Tieman's evaluation is worthy of some study. Remember our goal: Church growth through older adult ministry organized around the following congregation functions: worship, witness, nurture, service, fellowship, stewardship, health. Something is already going on in your congregations as it relates to a ministry with, for and by older adults. Your own reporting near the conclusion of our meeting/workshop certainly indicated this also.

## GETTING STARTED

It would seem that if we are to be models for others we need to do things systematically and regularly document what we do. May we suggest some things you might consider in getting started.

Creative strategic planning in addressing each of the identified functions.

Your Social Ministry Planning Manual includes a proven planning model.

Find a leader and others who are of an aggressive stance, faithful and have an open attitude.

Make assignments and be sure to set definite time limits.

Learn to know and document local and national resources.

Learn to know and document what is already going on in the congregation.

Learn to know and document the names, addresses, condition and needs of the older adults in your congregation. You may want to make a congregational profile of all ages but zero in on the groups of 55-64, 65-74, 75-84, 85 plus. Talk to people. Visiting face to face is best. Next best is the phone.

Get help and organize yourselves in such a way that you will be meeting the needs of other older adults. You may need to provide health, transportation, spiritual and fellowship services. People want to grow and want to be used even though they sometimes protest. Construct opportunities for people to exchange life experiences. With the coming of Christmas there should be a number of special opportunities for help with, by and for older adults.

Learn to know something about the aged and aging. You have some good resources already. See the module on aging in your congregational Social Ministry Planning Manual.

Remember you can order up to \$100 worth of resources and send the bill to us.

District leaders should be meeting with congregational reps by the middle of December for the purpose of encouraging, prodding and learning together.

Call or write if you think we can be of help. Our presenters will also continue to search out ideas and resources which may be helpful to us all in this older adult ministry project.

### GLEANINGS

Is old age the end or the beginning of what Christians have been living for?

Society has trained old people to act old. Oldsters get caught up in negative words, myths, weaknesses. They need a new attitude.

Some people are so quiet and so lost that others never hear their cry for help. Some are so alone they can't tolerate others around them - even God!

Our service should be so reliable that people will count on it.

Whenever people get together watch people for talents and gifts. We know about people in three ways - watch them, ask others about them - ask them.

Provide adventures in learning.

Life ought to be lived - a quality life - that for which life was created - what gives zip to life.

Older people as all people can be responsible for themselves. It is a major principle of healing.

People retire from a career. They are not retired from life.

Older adult Christian have much to offer the rest of the body of Christ. Old age is the Sabbath rest of life. Older Adults have an obligation to serve.

Upon retirement no one asks you, tells you or needs you.

People who are 45 never really know the problems of someone 65, 75 or 85.

When ministering to the elderly be careful that each side allows the freedom to be helped and to help.

The Church is a life time, intergenerational institution. It is larger than the family.

### FORMS

A reporting/sharing form is enclosed to enable sharing. A model ministry form is also enclosed. So next time we hope to have specific information from you to pass along to others working with this project.

PEACE AND JOY TO YOU ALWAYS ESPECIALLY IN THIS FESTIVE  
PORTION OF THE CHURCH YEAR

Project Coordinator - Bob Garmatz  
Project Director - Dick Krenzke

APPENDIX H

COMPOSITION OF MEMBERSHIP

Key: S—single; M—married; W—widowed; D—divorced;  
SF—split family

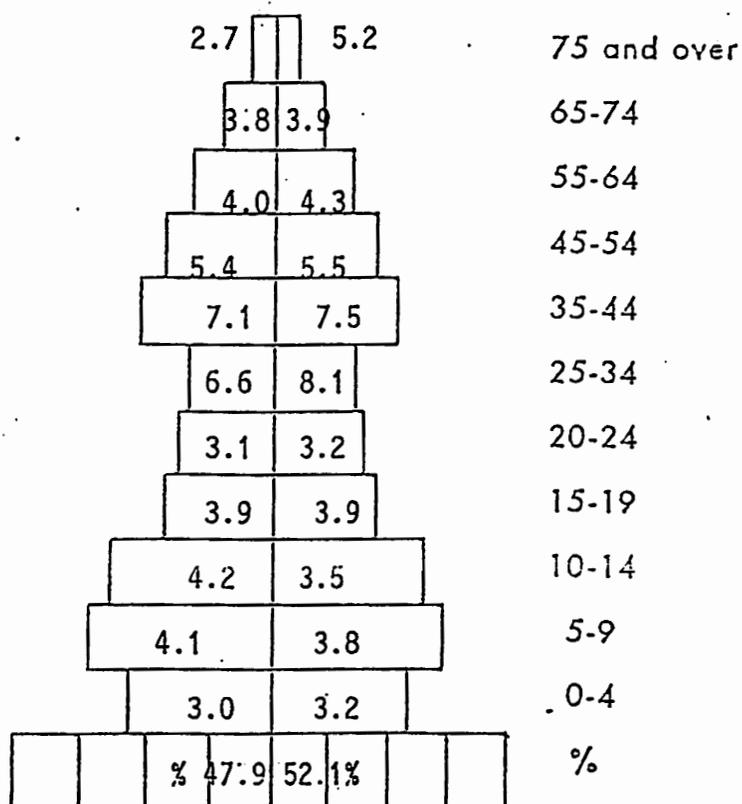
Age	S	M	W	D	SF	Total	S	M	W	D	SF	Total
0-4	—	—	—	—	—	83	—	—	—	—	—	89
5-14	—	—	—	—	—	233	—	—	—	—	—	204
15-24	—	—	—	—	—	199	—	—	—	—	—	201
25-34	—	—	—	—	—	187	—	—	—	—	—	226
35-44	—	—	—	—	—	199	—	—	—	—	—	212
45-54	—	—	—	—	—	153	—	—	—	—	—	154
55-64	—	—	—	—	—	112	—	—	—	—	—	120
65-74	—	—	—	—	—	106	—	—	—	—	—	110
75-over	—	—	—	—	—	76	—	—	—	—	—	147
						Male-1,348						Female-1,463

SAMPLE PYRAMID OF THE CHURCH

Male 47.9% of congregation

Female 52.1% of congregation

Median Age 25-34 years



## APPENDIX I

## ST. JOHN CHURCH &amp; SCHOOL

222 STAFFORD ST. PLYMOUTH, WISCONSIN 53073

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD

The eagle is usually associated with that which is upward and heavenly. In his Gospel, John soars upward in contemplation as if his whole self were born above the earth on eagle's wings.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

This letter is coming to you with a request since you are among those in our congregation who are between the ages of 65 and 74.

Our congregation is one of seven congregations in our Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod which has been chosen to develop a stronger ministry to older adults. This is important when the statistics show that 50% of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod members are 55 years of age or older. Our nation is also growing older.

I am asking you to consider being a part of this Older Adult Ministry study group. You are being asked to make a six month commitment to meeting together once a month to share our concerns for Christian ministry and service by, with, to, and for older adults. It will be a weekday meeting for one and a half hours.

The first meeting will be Wednesday, April 12th, from 10 AM to 11:30 AM in the sacristy. At that meeting we will choose a day and time once a month for six months which will be agreeable to the majority of the group.

Some of the objectives of our Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in developing a stronger Older Adult Ministry are:

1. To affirm older adults as gifts of God
2. To enable older adults to use their gifts in service to the church and community.
3. To enhance ministry by, with, to and for older adults.
4. To minister spiritually to the unchurched within the community.
5. To emphasize not just growth in numbers but the wholistic (spiritual, physical and social) growth of

individuals.

God has given us a challenge to do ministry - reaching out with the love of our Lord Jesus Christ to one another and to our community. I very much appreciate your input and pray that you will consider being a part of this small fellowship and sharing group (about 12 people).

If possible I would appreciate having your response to this request by Monday, March 25th. If you have any questions or concerns about this request, please feel free to contact me. Thank you very much. God be with you and bless you richly.

Your brother in Christ,

Dennis W. Pegorsch  
Pastor

# Chapter Three

## DISCOVERING YOUR GIFT(S)

**OBJECTIVES** The participants will:

1. Learn four considerations for discovering, developing, and using spiritual gifts.
2. Discover what will happen when everyone in the Church decides to discover, develop, and use his/her spiritual gift(s).
3. Take the "Spiritual Gifts Discovery Tool."
4. Recognize possible spiritual gifts.

### PART ONE

WHAT ARE FOUR CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE PERSON SEEKING TO DISCOVER, DEVELOP, AND USE HIS/HER SPIRITUAL GIFT(S)?

1. That person must be a baptized Christian.
2. That person must believe what Scripture says about the gifts of the Spirit.
3. That person must be willing to work and to use what God has given him/her.
4. That person must pray.

### PART TWO

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN EVERYONE DECIDES TO DISCOVER, DEVELOP, AND USE HIS/HER SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

- Each member will become more aware of how God can use His people in ministry.
- Members will be able to work together in love and harmony.
- Members will avoid pride, envy, or false humility.
- The Body of Christ will mature (Ephesians 4:13).
- The Church will grow (Ephesians 4:16).
- God will be glorified (1 Peter 4:11).

### PART THREE

WHAT TOOLS HELP CHRISTIANS DISCOVER THEIR SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

- The Scripture is our primary source of information. As the written Word of God, it is our "only rule and norm of faith and practice."
- The insights of Christian brothers and sisters as they guide and counsel one another.
- Various materials written by Christians may guide and aid us.

### PART FOUR

PLEASE COMPLETE THE "SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCOVERY TOOL" ON THE PAGES WHICH FOLLOW. PLEASE NOTE THESE POINTS BEFORE PROCEEDING:

- This tool is intended to give you a general indication as to the spiritual gifts you might possess.
- It is meant to assist you with part of Step 1 only (see Chapter Two).
- It is not the last word on which spiritual gifts you might or might not possess.
- It is not a test to prove you are a spiritual person.
- It is provided with the prayer that it will assist you in discovering or rediscovering your spiritual gifts.

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCOVERY TOOL

"... having their gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us ..."  
(Romans 12:6)

4 - Strongly Agree 3 - Agree Somewhat 2 - Undecided 1 - Disagree Somewhat 0 - Completely Disagree

	4	3	2	1	0
1. I like to proclaim God's Word to fellow Christians.	—	—	—	—	—
2. I'm excited in helping people to discover important truths in the Scripture.	—	—	—	—	—
3. It is enjoyable to motivate people to a higher spiritual commitment.	—	—	—	—	—
4. People with spiritual problems seem to come to me for advice and counsel.	—	—	—	—	—
5. I received excellent grades while in school.	—	—	—	—	—
6. There is great joy in doing "little" jobs around the church.	—	—	—	—	—
7. I look for opportunities to assist people in their work.	—	—	—	—	—
8. There is great joy in leading people to accomplish group goals.	—	—	—	—	—
9. I like to organize people for more effective ministry.	—	—	—	—	—
10. There is great satisfaction in giving large amounts of money for the Lord's work.	—	—	—	—	—
11. I feel great compassion for the problems of others.	—	—	—	—	—
12. It seems easy to perceive whether a person is honest or dishonest.	—	—	—	—	—
13. I am ready to try the impossible because I have a great trust in God.	—	—	—	—	—
14. I like to proclaim the Word of God to comfort others.	—	—	—	—	—
15. Teaching a Bible class is one of the most enjoyable things I do (or could do) in the church.	—	—	—	—	—
16. It is a joy to give encouragement to people who are discouraged.	—	—	—	—	—
17. I enjoy providing solutions to difficult problems in life.	—	—	—	—	—
18. It seems easy to learn difficult truths.	—	—	—	—	—
19. I enjoy doing routine tasks for the glory of God.	—	—	—	—	—
20. I enjoy helping with the emergency tasks around the church.	—	—	—	—	—
21. People seem to enjoy following me in doing an important task.	—	—	—	—	—
22. There is joy in making important decisions.	—	—	—	—	—
23. I find real joy in giving a generous portion of my money to the Lord.	—	—	—	—	—

4 - Strongly Agree 3 - Agree Somewhat 2 - Undecided 1 - Disagree Somewhat 0 - Completely Disagree

	4	3	2	1	0
24. Visiting people in retirement homes gives me great satisfaction.	—	—	—	—	—
25. I seem to know very quickly whether something is right or wrong.	—	—	—	—	—
26. When things seem impossible, I'm ready to move forward.	—	—	—	—	—
27. I enjoy relating and sharing God's Word to the issues of the day.	—	—	—	—	—
28. It seems that people learn when I teach them.	—	—	—	—	—
29. I like to encourage inactive church members to become involved Christians again.	—	—	—	—	—
30. It seems that people generally follow my advice.	—	—	—	—	—
31. I am able to understand difficult portions of God's Word.	—	—	—	—	—
32. I receive great satisfaction in doing small or trivial tasks in the church.	—	—	—	—	—
33. I desire to do the tasks which will free others for important ministry.	—	—	—	—	—
34. It is more effective to delegate a task to someone else rather than to do it myself.	—	—	—	—	—
35. I enjoy the responsibility for the achievement of group goals.	—	—	—	—	—
36. I appreciate the opportunity to financially support a critical situation.	—	—	—	—	—
37. I sense joy in comforting people in difficult situations.	—	—	—	—	—
38. The difference between truth and error is easily perceived by me.	—	—	—	—	—
39. I am often ready to believe God will lead us through situations when others feel it is impossible.	—	—	—	—	—
40. It is important for me to speak God's Word of warning and judgment in the world today.	—	—	—	—	—
41. One of the joys of my ministry is training people to be more effective Christians.	—	—	—	—	—
42. People who are feeling perplexed often come to me for encouragement and comfort.	—	—	—	—	—
43. I feel that I have a special insight in selecting the best alternative in a difficult situation.	—	—	—	—	—
44. I have a clear understanding of Biblical doctrines (teachings).	—	—	—	—	—
45. I find more satisfaction in doing a job than finding someone else to do it.	—	—	—	—	—

4 - Strongly Agree 3 - Agree Somewhat 2 - Undecided 1 - Disagree Somewhat 0 - Completely Disagree

	4	3	2	1	0
46. I appreciate a ministry of helping other people to bear their burdens.	—	—	—	—	—
47. It is a thrill to inspire others to greater involvement in church work.	—	—	—	—	—
48. The development of effective plans for a church ministry gives me great satisfaction.	—	—	—	—	—
49. It is a joy to see how much money I can give to the Lord.	—	—	—	—	—
50. I enjoy ministering to a person who is sick in the hospital.	—	—	—	—	—
51. I can judge well between the truthfulness and error in a given theological statement.	—	—	—	—	—
52. People seem to view me as one who believes everything is possible.	—	—	—	—	—
53. In a Bible class it seems essential to share God's Word even if it irritates others.	—	—	—	—	—
54. It is easy to organize materials for teaching a Bible class.	—	—	—	—	—
55. I would rather call on a delinquent family in the church than an unchurched family.	—	—	—	—	—
56. I have a strong sense of confidence in my solutions to problems.	—	—	—	—	—
57. It is an exciting challenge to read and study a difficult book of the Bible.	—	—	—	—	—
58. I like to do things without attracting much attention.	—	—	—	—	—
59. If a family is facing a serious crisis, I enjoy the opportunity to help them.	—	—	—	—	—
60. There is great satisfaction in having others follow me in performing a task.	—	—	—	—	—
61. I would rather make decisions for the group than persuade them to reach the same decision.	—	—	—	—	—
62. I can give sacrificially because I know that God will meet my needs.	—	—	—	—	—
63. It is a special satisfaction to visit people who are confined in their homes.	—	—	—	—	—
64. I often seek the motives of a person and look beneath the words.	—	—	—	—	—
65. When people are discouraged I enjoy giving them a positive vision.	—	—	—	—	—

## THE DISCOVERY TOOL PROFILE SHEET

**NOW SCORE THE DISCOVERY TOOL. FOLLOW THESE STEPS:**

- The first column lists the gifts for which you were tested.
- The numbers in the columns which follow correspond to statements in the "tool" you just completed.
- Place the number value of your response after the number of the statement to which you responded (e.g. question 1 — you said "strongly agree" — it has a value of 4 — put 4 after number 1 on your profile sheet).
- Complete scoring the entire "tool."
- Total the 5 numbers for each gift and place that figure on the line under "Total."
- On the next page list the possible gifts discovered in order, starting with the gift with the highest score as number 1, the next highest number 2, etc.

Gifts						Total
1. Prophecy	1	14	27	40	53	= _____
2. Teaching	2	15	28	41	54	= _____
3. Exhortation	3	16	29	42	55	= _____
4. Wisdom	4	17	30	43	56	= _____
5. Knowledge	5	18	31	44	57	= _____
6. Serving	6	19	32	45	58	= _____
7. Helps	7	20	33	46	59	= _____
8. Leadership	8	21	34	47	60	= _____
9. Administration	9	22	35	48	61	= _____
10. Giving	10	23	36	49	62	= _____
11. Mercy	11	24	37	50	63	= _____
12. Discernment	12	25	38	51	64	= _____
13. Faith	13	26	39	52	65	= _____

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Do I begin to sense how God has gifted me and for what reason?
2. How do I feel? Do I need to thank God more often for His gifts to me?
3. How will these insights help me as God's steward?

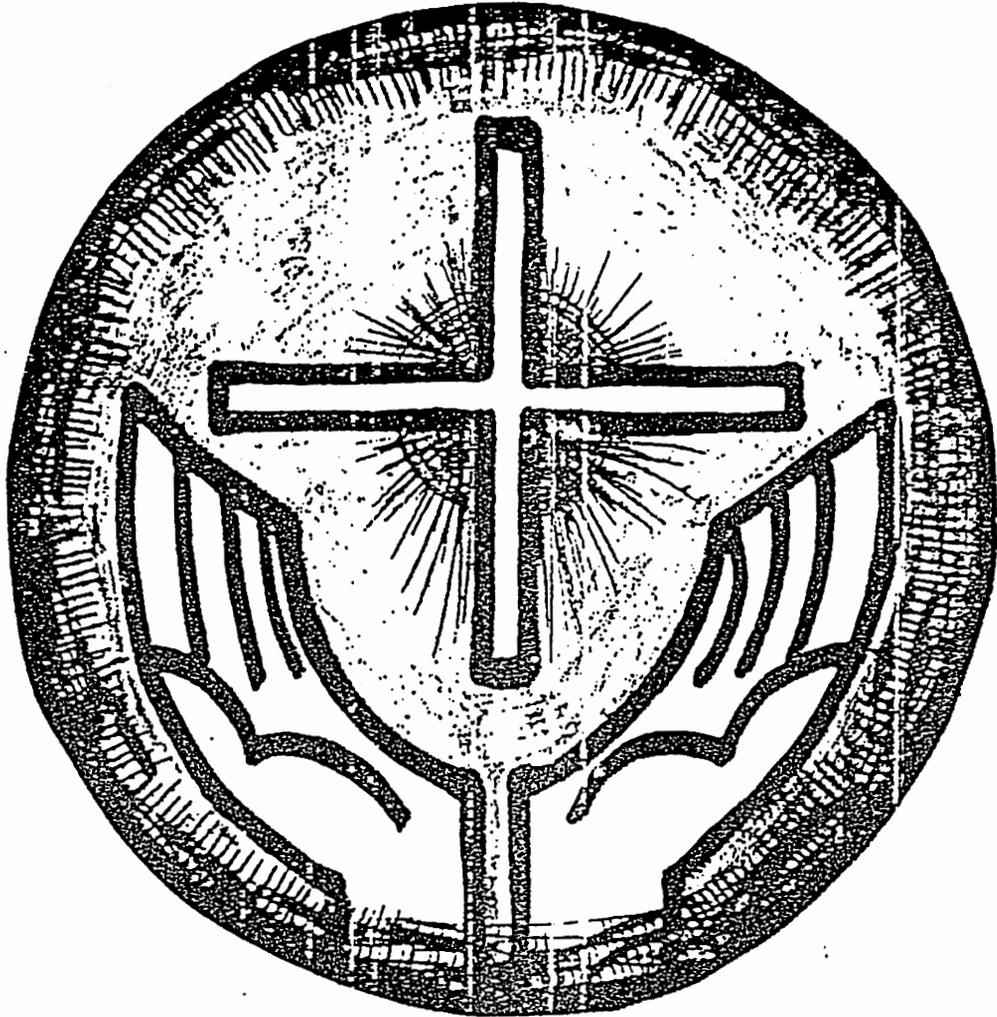
**PERSONAL RESPONSE**

**MY POSSIBLE GIFTS**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_



As each has  
received a gift,  
employ it for  
one another ✠ ✠

## "THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT"

### Introduction:

All Christians have been blessed by the Holy Spirit with certain spiritual gifts. As Paul states in Romans 12:6, "God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well," so, then, should our lives be focused on the goal of using our blessings to the best of our abilities. The Holy Spirit displays God's power through each one of us as a means of building the entire church. It is the same Holy Spirit who gives these specific gifts, deciding which gift(s) each one of us should have. It then becomes our Christian duty to put these blessings into action for the benefit of the Kingdom.

Before beginning to take your spiritual gifts analysis, there are four fundamental steps we must share together. To definitely discover your spiritual gift(s) you must:

- 1) Be a Christian - You must be a committed member of the Body of Christ.
- 2) Believe in Spiritual Gifts - You must accept the fact that God has blessed you with one or more gifts.
- 3) Be Willing to Serve - You have a spiritual job description built around the use of your gift(s). God's blessings are given to us for our use.
- 4) Pray - You must pray before, during and after this process. Since God wants you to discover your gift(s), He certainly will guide and direct you as you attempt to identify them.

As we begin the process of discovering your spiritual gift(s) let us keep in mind that the results will show you how you are equipped to do better work for the Lord, building up the church, the Body of Christ, to a position of strength and maturity....to the point of being filled full with Christ.

Please turn now to the analysis on the following page.















Refer back to statement one at the beginning of the analysis.

Place the numerical value of each response next to the number of each statement:

Scoring Key: Much - 3  
Some - 2  
Little - 1  
Not at All - 0

Now, add up the five numbers in each row, placing the sum in the total column.

After completing this, please turn to the next page.

Rows	Value of Answers					Total	Gift
Row A	1	21	41	61	81		Administration
Row B	2	22	42	62	82		Craftsmanship-Arts & Crafts
Row C	3	23	43	63	83		Craftsmanship - Manual
Row D	4	24	44	64	84		Evangelism
Row E	5	25	45	65	85		Exhortation
Row F	6	26	46	66	86		Faith
Row G	7	27	47	67	87		Giving
Row H	8	28	48	68	88		Helps
Row I	9	29	49	69	89		Hospitality
Row J	10	30	50	70	90		Intercession
Row K	11	31	51	71	91		Knowledge
Row L	12	32	52	72	92		Leadership
Row M	13	33	53	73	93		Mercy
Row N	14	34	54	74	94		Music - Vocal
Row O	15	35	55	75	95		Music - Instrumental
Row P	16	36	56	76	96		Serving
Row Q	17	37	57	77	97		Shepherding
Row R	18	38	58	78	98		Teaching
Row S	19	39	59	79	99		Wisdom
Row T	20	40	60	80	100		Writing

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Trenton, Michigan 48183

"THE CHURCH ON THE GROW"

"THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT - DEFINED"

On the following pages you will find the names, definitions and Scriptural references of the spiritual gifts employed here at St. Paul Church. Please place a "D" on the lines preceding those gifts you have discovered to be your dominant gifts and an "S" on the lines preceding those gifts you have discovered to be your subordinate gifts. You may also number them sequentially as an aid for you as you begin to develop them. Use the "cluster page" in the blue analysis booklet for this sequential numbering.

EXAMPLE:     D 2     Administration: You have....

This means that the gift of administration has been discovered by you as a probable dominant gift and it has received the second highest numerical value.

---

Administration: You have been blessed with the special ability to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unit of the Body of Christ and to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of those goals.

Scriptural References: I Corinthians 12:28, I Corinthians 12:5,  
Acts 6:1-7, Romans 12:8, Acts 15:7-12,  
I Timothy 5:17, Proverbs 24:3-4

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Craftmanship - Arts & Crafts: You have been blessed with the special ability to use your hands, thoughts, and mind to further the Kingdom of God through artistic, creative means such as sewing, knitting, making designs, painting or making banners. You may also serve as a leader for others in forming their abilities in this area.

Scriptural References: Exodus 31:3-11, Exodus 30:22-25,  
Acts 18:3, Acts 16:14

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Craftmanship - Manual: You have been blessed with the special ability to help the Body grow through the maintenance, care and upkeep of all that the Lord has given us. The works of your hands and mind are of benefit to your fellow Christians for the beautification of God's Kingdom here on earth.

Scriptural References: II Chronicles 34:9-13, I Chronicles 4:14,  
Acts 18:3

---

**Evangelism:** You have been blessed with the special ability to share the Gospel with unbelievers in such a way that men and women become disciples of Jesus and responsible members of the Body of Christ.

Scriptural References: Ephesians 4:11, Acts 8:5-6, II Timothy 4:5, Acts 21:8, Acts 5:42, Acts 10:36, Acts 11:20, Acts 13:32, Romans 10:15

---

**Exhortation:** You have been blessed with the special ability to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement and counsel to other members of the Body in such a way that they feel helped and uplifted.

Scriptural References: Romans 12:8, Acts 4:36, I Timothy 4:13, Hebrews 10:25, Acts 14:22

---

**Faith:** You have been blessed with the special ability to see with certain confidence God's will and purpose for the future of His work here on earth.

Scriptural References: I Corinthians 12:9, I Corinthians 13:2, Romans 8:31, Hebrews 11:22, Hebrews 11:30

---

**Giving:** You have been blessed with the special ability to contribute your material resources to the work of the Lord with great joy, eagerness and liberality.

Scriptural References: Mark 12:41-44, Romans 12:8, II Corinthians 8:1-7, 9:2, Luke 18:12, Malachi 3:10

---

**Helps:** You have been blessed with the special ability to invest your talents in the life and ministry of other members of the Body, thus enabling the persons whom you help to increase their effectiveness in the use of their gifts.

Scriptural References: I Corinthians 12:28, Romans 16:1-2, Mark 2:3-4, I Timothy 6:2, Acts 9:36, I Peter 4:9-10

---

**Hospitality:** You have been blessed with the special ability to provide open house and warm welcome for those in need of food and lodging; to care for those not in the immediate family with joy and effectiveness.

Scriptural References: Romans 12:9-13, Hebrews 13:1-2, Acts 16:15, Acts 21:16-17, Romans 16:23, III John 1:5-8

---

**Intercession:** You have been blessed with the special ability to pray for extended periods of time on a regular basis and also to see frequent and specific answers to your prayers to a degree much greater than a fellow Christian who has not been blessed with an intercessory gift.

Scriptural References: I Timothy 2:1-8, James 5:14-16, Acts 12:1-17, Acts 16:25-31, Colossians 4:12

---

**Knowledge:** You have been blessed with the special ability to discover, accumulate, analyze and clarify information and ideas that are pertinent to the growth and well-being of the Body.

Scriptural References: I Corinthians 12:8, Romans 15:14, I Corinthians 13:8

---

**Leadership:** You have been blessed with the special ability to set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish these goals for the glory of God.

Scriptural References: Romans 12:8, Acts 15:7-12, Hebrews 13:17, Acts 6:2-4, Acts 7:10

---

**Mercy:** You have been blessed with the special ability to feel genuine concern and compassion for individuals, both Christian and non-Christian, who suffer distressing physical, mental or emotional problems, and to translate that compassion into cheerfully done deeds that reflect Christ's love and alleviate their suffering.

Scriptural References: Romans 12:8, Acts 16:33-34, Luke 10:33-35, I Thessalonians 5:14, Acts 9:36

---

**Music - Vocal:** You have been blessed with the special ability to use your voice in the singing of praises and joy to the Lord for the benefit of others and for the edification of the Body of Christ.

Scriptural References: I Chronicles 16:41, II Chronicles 5:12-13, Deuteronomy 31:22, Romans 15:9

---

**Music - Instrumental:** You have been blessed with the special ability to play a musical instrument to the praise of the Lord, for the benefit of others and for the building up of the Body of Christ.

Scriptural References: II Chronicles 34:12, I Chronicles 16:42, I Samuel 16:16, Psalm 150:5

---

**Serving:** You have been blessed with the special ability to identify the unmet needs involved in a task related to God's work, and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired goals.

Scriptural References: Romans 12:7, II Timothy 1:16-18,  
II Corinthians 8:19-20, Luke 22:22-27

---

**Shepherding:** You have been blessed with the special ability to assume the personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers on a long-term basis so they may grow in the Lord and build one another up.

Scriptural References: Ephesians 4:11, Acts 14:23, I Timothy 3:1-7,  
I Peter 5:1-3

---

**Teaching:** You have been blessed with the special ability to communicate information relevant to the health and ministry of the Body and its members (children and/or adults) in such a way that they will learn and be edified as a result of your sharing with them.

Scriptural References: I Corinthians 12:28, Romans 12:7,  
Ephesians 4:11, Acts 18:24-28, I Timothy 3:2,  
Acts 20:20-21

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**Wisdom:** You have been blessed with the special ability to apply the given knowledge you have received to specific needs which arise in the Body of Christ, helping to rectify those needs and build the Body.

Scriptural References: I Corinthians 12:8, Acts 6:3-10,  
II Peter 3:15

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**Writing:** You have been blessed with the special ability to formulate your thoughts and ideas into meaningful, written forms so that the reader will find courage, guidance, knowledge, or edification through the words you share with them.

Scriptural References: Psalms 45:1, Acts 15:19-20, Philippians 3:1,  
I Timothy 3:14-15, Jude 1:3

DOMINANT GIFTS

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

SUBORDINATE GIFTS

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Gifts I have definitely discovered, developed and used:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF ANALYSIS: \_\_\_\_\_

"DISCOVERING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT (S)"

As you reflect on the spiritual gifts you have discovered through the gifts analysis you should now begin to find which ones truly are and are not your gifts. To do this we must take the five step approach that was shared with you at the conclusion of the gifts analysis.

- Step One: Explore The Possibilities: You should continue in the follow-up work of the gifts by reading through the three key chapters in Scripture dealing with Spiritual Gifts. (I Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4) You should reflect on the meanings of the gifts you have discovered through the analysis; the meanings of the gifts themselves and the meanings they have for you as an individual. You should be aware of the options Scripture offers you so you can have something concrete to look for as you move ahead.
- Step Two: Experiment With As Many As Possible: If you do not try a particular gift you have discovered through the analysis you will have a hard time knowing whether you have it or not. By using your "Spiritual Gifts Development and Use" form you can have a methodical vehicle to guide you effectively through your experimenting with each gift. The key here is to get involved with each tentative gift area.
- Step Three: Examine Your Feelings: When you experiment with a gift and enjoy using it that is a good sign, however, if you dislike the service areas of a particular gift that is also a fairly good sign that it is not one of your gifts. You should be happy in your service, you should enjoy what you are doing, and you should be effective.
- Step Four: Evaluate Your Effectiveness: Spiritual gifts are meant to be used for the benefit of others. Each one has been designed by God to accomplish a specific objective. As you use your gift(s) you should see positive results taking place. You should be gift-use effective. If you are not seeing any results, you probably do not have that particular gift.
- Step Five: Expect Confirmation From The Body: There is no gift which can be discovered, developed and used all on your own. Gifts are given to build up other members of the Body. Other Christians will recognize your gift and give you confirmation of it. If you feel you have a gift and no one else is agreeing with you, you should take a closer look at yourself and assess where you are attempting to go.

In all cases of the "five E's" the key is prayer. The Lord will guide you into accurate discoveries of your gifts if you allow Him to be the guiding and directing force in all your endeavors.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Please use an "X" to indicate the areas of service with which you would like to become involved through the use of your gifts.

ADMINISTRATION

- \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Education
- \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Elders
- \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Trustees
- \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Stewardship
- \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Finance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Directors
- \_\_\_\_\_ Congregational President
- \_\_\_\_\_ Congregational Vice-President
- \_\_\_\_\_ Congregational Secretary
- \_\_\_\_\_ Treasurer
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assistant Treasurer
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finance Staff
- \_\_\_\_\_ Financial Secretary
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assistant Financial Secretary
- \_\_\_\_\_ Auditor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Library Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tape Library Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter Editor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Master Planning Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Growth Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spiritual Gifts Analysis Interviewer
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spiritual Gifts Analysis Cataloging

CRAFTSMANSHIP

- \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Trustees
- \_\_\_\_\_ Altar Circle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lydia Circle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Three "C'S" Circle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dorcas Circle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Upkeep/Maintenance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Drama Club
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday School Audio-Visual Director
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gardening Club
- \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter Artist
- \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Trustees Special Projects Group

EVANGELISM

- \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Evangelism
- \_\_\_\_\_ Evangelism Team
- \_\_\_\_\_ Evangelism Team - Zone Leader
- \_\_\_\_\_ Love Bus
- \_\_\_\_\_ Balmoral Visitation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Applewood Visitation
- \_\_\_\_\_ St. Benedict's Visitation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood Tract Distribution

EXHORTATION - WISDOM

- \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Elders
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunshine Circle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Koinonia Circle

EXHORTATION - WISDOM (Continued)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Love Bus
- \_\_\_\_\_ Balmoral Visitation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Applewood Visitation
- \_\_\_\_\_ St. Benedict's Visitation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital Visitation Group
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation to Worship/Bible Study

GIVING

- \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Stewardship
- \_\_\_\_\_ Loyalty Committee

HELPS

- \_\_\_\_\_ Book Store
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Library Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Altar Circle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lambs Circle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mary-Martha Circle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Loyalty Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Women's Missionary League
- \_\_\_\_\_ Office Work
- \_\_\_\_\_ Usher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tape-Library Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Week School Secretary
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Week School Teacher's Aide
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Week School Transportation Supervisor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday School Secretary

HELPS (Continued)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday School Teacher's Aide
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday School Audio-Visual Director
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vacation Bible School Secretary
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vacation Bible School Teacher's Aide
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vacation Bible School Recreation Leader
- \_\_\_\_\_ Basketball Referee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Softball Umpire
- \_\_\_\_\_ Volleyball Referee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation - Athletic Program
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recording Church and Communion Attendance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Newsletter Editor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Newsletter Typist
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Newsletter Collator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Newsletter Artist
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Growth Analysis Cataloging
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation - People to Church and Bible Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood Pamphlet and Tract Distribution
- \_\_\_\_\_ Office Telephone Reminder-er
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nursery Teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer of Letters to Visitors
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recording Visitors

HOSPITALITY

- \_\_\_\_\_ Hosts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Koinonia Circle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Greeters
- \_\_\_\_\_ Share-Group Host

INTERCESSION

[153]

- \_\_\_\_\_ Prayer Chain
- \_\_\_\_\_ Evangelist Intercessor

KNOWLEDGE

- \_\_\_\_\_ Master Planning Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Growth Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Growth Analysis Interviewer

LEADERSHIP

- \_\_\_\_\_ Bethel Bible Class Leader
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bible Class Leader
- \_\_\_\_\_ Boy's Athletics - Coaching
- \_\_\_\_\_ Boy's Basketball - Coaching
- \_\_\_\_\_ Boy's Softball - Coaching
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cheerleaders - Coaching
- \_\_\_\_\_ Coaching - General
- \_\_\_\_\_ Girls' Athletics - Coaching
- \_\_\_\_\_ Girls' Basketball - Coaching
- \_\_\_\_\_ Girls' Softball - Coaching
- \_\_\_\_\_ Girls' Volleyball - Coaching
- \_\_\_\_\_ Junior Youth Group Leader
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Week School Coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Week School Dinner Program Coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Week School Transportation Supervisor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday School Coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teen Bible Class Leader
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vacation Bible School Coordinator

LEADERSHIP (Continued)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Youth Group Leader
- \_\_\_\_\_ Youth Group Coaching
- \_\_\_\_\_ Master Planning Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Growth Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Growth Analysis Interviewer
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nursery Teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adult Recreation Leader
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vacation Bible School Recreation Leader
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Week School Dinner Program Group Leader

MERCY

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunshine Circle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dorcas Circle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mary-Martha Circle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Love Bus
- \_\_\_\_\_ Balmoral Visitation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital Visitation Group
- \_\_\_\_\_ St. Benedicts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Applewood Visitation

MUSIC

- \_\_\_\_\_ Senior Choir
- \_\_\_\_\_ Girls' Choir
- \_\_\_\_\_ Junior Ensemble
- \_\_\_\_\_ Handbell Choir
- \_\_\_\_\_ Instrumental Music (\_\_\_\_\_)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Gospel Ensemble
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday School Pianist
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday School Song Leader
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vacation Bible School Pianist
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vacation Bible School Song Leader

SERVING

- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Upkeep/Maintenance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Food Pantry - Stephenites
- \_\_\_\_\_ Loyalty Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Week School Dinner Helper
- \_\_\_\_\_ Basketball Referee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Softball Umpire
- \_\_\_\_\_ Volleyball Referee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Driver for Away Athletic Events
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sign-Board Announcements
- \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter Typing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter Collation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Growth Analysis Cataloging
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transporting People to Church and Bible Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tape Recording Worship Services
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Pew Maintenance (Pencils-Cards-Hymnals-Etc)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Office Mailings Preparers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Post Office Delivery People
- \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Reminders
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writing Visitor Letters

SERVING (Continued)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Recording Visitors
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Week School Baker
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Week School Dinner Ticket Taker

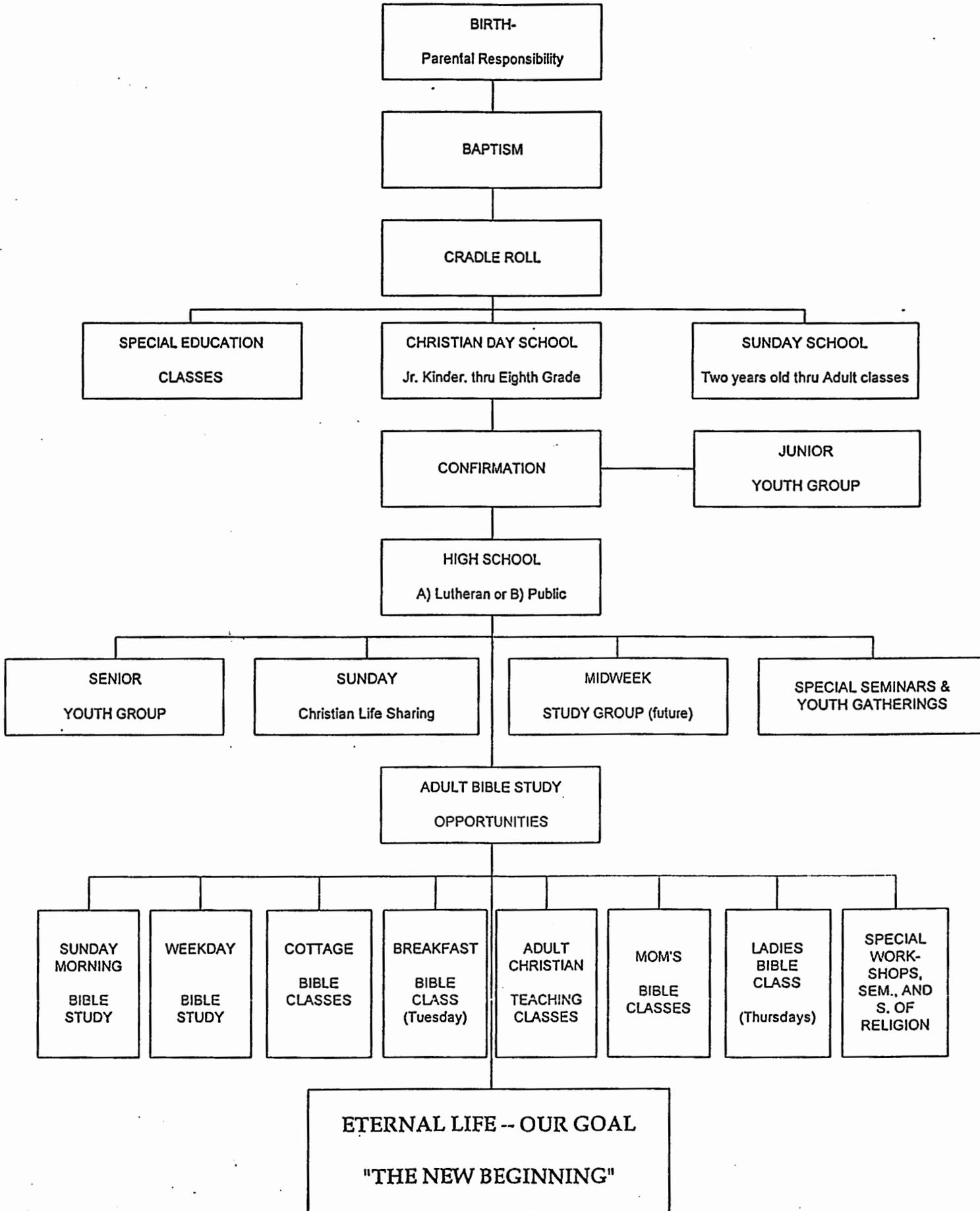
TEACHING

- \_\_\_\_\_ Bethel Bible Class Leader
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bible Class Teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Education
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Week School Teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday School Teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teen Bible Class Leader
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vacation Bible School Teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Week School Teacher's Aide
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday School Teacher's Aide
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vacation Bible School Teacher's Aide
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nursery Teacher

WRITING

- \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter Article Writer
- \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter Editor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Newspaper Article Writer
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer of Visitor Letters

St. John Lutheran Church  
Christian Education Concept  
(Cradle to the Grave)



## APPENDIX M

## A Pilgrim People and Their Journey Home

## Bible Study

Introduction: Countless local and national agencies and organizations work specifically with older persons. However, it is the church through local congregations that is most uniquely equipped for ministry with aging persons. Parishes and parishioners proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is that Gospel that brings the Good News establishing and restoring relationships with our Lord and with each other across all lines. It is the Gospel promises of His love and forgiveness, His power and presence that lighten our steps as we journey together on the road to heaven.

## I. The Pilgrimage

## A. God created all people to be bearers of His image.

"Then will all your people be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendor" (Is. 60:21).

What a beautiful affirmation of creation's purpose that humankind was formed to be in the "image of God"! This display of the Creator's splendor is to take place in this world, among the people with whom we live. It is to be evidenced in the chores of the day to day living.

DISCUSSION: Someone may ask you, a Christian, "What is God like?" In what sense could you respond, "Watch me and I will show you?"

## B. God's image is that He loves all people, totally, without reservation.

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God, because God is love! This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him" (I John 4:7-8).

DISCUSSION: Some people are "easy to love" as individuals or collectively. Who is it difficult

for you to love as an individual? a group?

- C. Age in no way alters this intention of God or lessens its demands.

"The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green proclaiming, 'The Lord is upright; he is my Rock and there is no wickedness in him.'" (Cf RSV) "They will bring forth fruit in old age, they are ever full of sap and green..." (Ps. 92:12-15).

DISCUSSION: Many older people say, "We've done our part. It's time for younger people to do the work." For some this is a pattern of uninvolved long standing. For others it is a result of weariness or burn-out. How can we motivate older people to accept responsibility for good stewardship of their time, talents and rich experience, for continued involvement in the life of church and community?

- D. The life and well-being of every person is to be cherished by all.

"When I consider your heavens the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor" (Ps. 8:3-8).

DISCUSSION: Two problems in human relationships are identified in James 3:8-10 and Gen. 9:6. The "image of God" in the stricter sense refers to man's complete knowledge of God and the will to do only God's will. How does this understanding of "image of God" touch these issues (Col. 3:10)? How do these passages provide insight into developing our own attitudes toward the elderly?

- E. Sin totally destroyed the perfect image given to mankind in Creation.

"You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan" (Ps. 90:8,9; see also 51:3,5; Rom. 7:15,17-19).

DISCUSSION: Frequently mistakes and sins of the past rise up to haunt and harass the conscience of the elderly. How does the Christian community provide an environment in which the elderly can bring up these painful things of the past and receive absolution? How does our imperfection reveal itself in our treatment of older persons?

- F. In Christ, the Creator redeems all people and all of life, restoring them to Himself and His purposes.

"He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view...Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." (II Cor. 5:15-16).

DISCUSSION: How are these words a comfort to us? to older persons? Locate the areas of life in old age to which the words of Is. 46:3-4 might be a particularly helpful affirmation.

- G. In Christ, the Redeemer restores the relationship people have with each other.

"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ...God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other." (I Cor. 12:12, 24-25 NIV; see also 12-31).

DISCUSSION: How does Christ's love and forgiveness nourish members of His body? Give examples of how a church body shows care and concern for older adults. What encouragement can aging persons find in these verses? How does our relationship with our Savior effect how we treat fellow pilgrims as we journey together?

- H. All of life, from infancy, through youth and through old age, has purpose. The Creator thus presses on, relentlessly. He will have His pilgrim people, displays of His splendor in every generation.

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the

Gentiles and for the glory of your people Israel"  
(Luke 2:29-32).

DISCUSSION: It is generally assumed that Simeon was an old man. Identify the fruit, the good works, which were uniquely the product of his old age. How might these good works be different from those in his prime of life?

## II. The Pilgrim Band

Pilgrims are not loners. "God sets the lonely in families" (Ps. 68:6). John writes, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another" (I John 1:7). There is no way we can claim God as Father and ignore the rest of His children. We make the pilgrimage together, excluding no one, making companions of everyone.

- A. The Church is one, holy, catholic, Christian and apostolic. It is a communion of saints. Scriptures say so and our creeds affirm it.

"There is one body and one spirit--just as you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:4).

- B. The Church is a life-span community, uniquely inter-generational. Outside the family, there is no social structure that so without question or reservation reaches "from cradle to the grave" and beyond that by its very nature includes all without discrimination as to age.

- C. The church is already elderly! The percentage of elderly people in an average congregation is 10 percent higher than that of the general population. It is said that a congregation of 500 in 1900 had 21 over 65; in 1976, 54 over 65; in 1986, 125 over 65! Already the business and political communities have recognized this coming tidal wave of older adults--people who shop, vote and pay taxes.

- D. The Gospel enables the elderly to have or continue to have a rich and vibrant life in Christ. Christian preaching, teaching, witness and ministry need to take a sharp aim at their needs, as perceived by them. "'He that has ears to hear, let him hear,' Jesus said. Fair enough, but he that has tongue to talk, let him say it in a way that helps them to listen" (Preaching Helps, January 1975).

DISCUSSION: List the names of two or three older people you know quite well. As you know them or have heard them share their lives and feeling with you, what are some of their deep inner needs they seem to be experiencing? How can you as a person, a fellow Christian, or the church, as part of their spiritual family, respond to these needs? Be as specific and concrete as possible.

- E. People are not like plants in the garden or even old fruit trees that eventually simply stop producing. Psalm 92 affirms that the Creator expects the production of spiritual good to the very end of life. Joe Hudson of Illinois said, "I'm not a senior citizen. I am a seasoned citizen. I'm not in my retirement years. I'm in my elective years."

Time Magazine (Nov. 2, 1987) reviews "Examining the Limits of Life," by Daniel Calahan. The author is quoted as he writes about many of the non-ill elderly. "Their lives...would again gain meaning if instead of taking a cruise, they would work for a cause."

It's a matter of the church's teaching on stewardship to target goals for growth in Christian giving, living and sharing appropriate for older parishioners. We should set up challenges for service for them with the same zeal, hope and expectation with which we present to them to other members of the parish.

DISCUSSION: Explore some of the following parish and community needs and creatively suggest specific ways your congregation can help older parishioners offer useful ministry.

- a. Sunday schools, parish schools, day-care programs and mothers-day-out programs need helpers and grandparents, who can just be there to love and be role models for young children.
- b. Home-bound elderly need things worth-while, productive to do. Are clerical parish tasks available? How about a responsibility list for a weekly call to another elderly person, a person home with a long-lasting illness or a mother caring for children.
- c. Older people need one another to share their life stories. How can the parish create

opportunities for older persons to be with one another, with teenagers, with small children, and with those just a generation or two younger, to talk about the persons and events in their lives--to sort out those for which one is grateful and those that have been painful. In the process, a major source of spiritual help for all generations will become available to celebrate life and for older people, to let go of hurt and anger that still give distress.

So the pilgrim band clasps within itself both infant and elderly as equal companions on the pilgrimage, expecting from each and all their fullest participation in the mission of the Church for which they have been created and redeemed.

### III. The Journey Home

#### A. Life presses on relentless toward fulfillment.

"Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do; forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things" (Phil. 3:13). (Cf also Eccl. 3:1-2 and James 4:13-15).

#### B. In the meantime there are tasks to be completed, gifts to pass on. Lillian had no living relatives. Over the years she had accumulated many lovely home furnishings. One by one she invited friends and people she admired to come to her home for tea and asked them to pick out one or two items they would like to have as gifts from her.

DISCUSSION: How can the church be a resource for older people in making plans for the disposition of their possessions in a way that will not prematurely impoverish them and at the same time enrich their lives knowing that they will have made a significant contribution to the lives of others? (There is more to this than wills and trusts. There are other things to pass on that we easily forget.)

1. Despite computerization and techniques for data storage and retrieval, there are some things that can be passed on only from heart to heart, the wisdom and stories of accumulated years.

"Remember the days of old; consider the generations

long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders and they will explain it to you" (Deut. 32:7).

2. Hope is missing from the lives of so many of every generation. Reflective, elderly people who have passed through the waters become themselves a living stream of joyful expectation. We need to hear from them before they are no more.

"...it is my eager expectation and hope that I shall not be at all ashamed...now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death...My desire is to depart and to be with Christ, for that is better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account (Phil. 1:20ff).

- C. Losses are for learning and growing. Not every loss must be recouped, not every illness healed. Isaac Bashevis Singer in "The Image and Other Stories," wrote, "I will muddle through one way or another. I have developed my own theory: Not all maladies must be cured."

DISCUSSION: Losses are inevitable. Write down the names of two or three persons in the parish, either young or old, who have experienced some loss this past year. Create some way in which the elderly, who are experienced in dealing with loss, can be put in touch with those still going through the grief process of losing precious parts of their lives.

DISCUSSION: Frances, in her mid-80s, was trained in Europe as a pianist and music teacher. She has cared for a husband through terminal cancer, a daughter who has had a double mastectomy and another daughter in advanced years of multiple sclerosis. Despite her increased frailty and hearing loss, Frances makes regular visits to Canada to be with her daughter with MS. "I consider this my calling. I must do it as long as I can and I do it gladly. When you are old and have lost many things, you know what is worthwhile in life."

Share with one another how your losses have helped you appreciate what is "worth-while" in life.

- D. Reality, not escape, is the way of life. Trivialization or romanticizing old age are not only rejection of the elderly and their infirmities but also an offense. "Speaking the truth in love"

addresses not only the problems of inter-personal relationships but also presence of illnesses, dependency and ultimately death.

DISCUSSION: Lucy, an alert and sensitive nurse, is living her last years in a nursing home. Not long ago she said to one of her care-givers that she is making every effort to be "graciously dependent!"

Look within yourself to find the reasons why it is so hard to talk honestly, openly and freely about the frailties of age and the inevitability of death.

- E. Old age can become an active, reflective, celebrating sabbath of all life! As the Lord rested from His creation labors, His observation of all He had made was that it was very good. Slowly we come to the time when we need hours for reflection, sharing, celebrating all that has been.

"A hoary head is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life" (Prov. 16:31).

"So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should enjoy his work for that is his lot; who can bring him to see what will be after him?"

DISCUSSION: A well-known churchman said that successful, lively congregations deliberately seek occasions for celebrating successes in parish life. Brainstorm ideas for celebrating the mature years of life, of the elderly.

- F. Jesus was persistently the advocate of the widowed, the orphaned, the imprisoned, the leper, of all in any sort of need. He expects the fellowship of the saints to be alert, assertive advocates for the powerless. Among them are the frail elderly.

"...learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the fatherless, plead the cause of the widow (Is. 1:17).

"Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed" (Ps. 82:3).

DISCUSSION: An undercurrent of reaction seems to be emerging against the apparently "affluent" elderly receiving social security and medicare benefits. List 10 people over 75 or try to call them to mind. How many of them fit into the category of the

"affluent"? How many, especially women, are really suffering hardship? How may the church, both as the Christian community and as individual citizens of society, find itself in a position of becoming an advocate for the elderly? How would this role be put into action?

- G. Death becomes the time of fulfillment, the finishing of the course, the completion of the pilgrimage.

"I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight of faith, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that day" (II Tim. 4:6).

DISCUSSION: Martha told the nurse, "Tonight will be the night, I think. I think it will be tonight." And it was. She died before morning. What would you say to your mother if she said that to you? When we refuse the elderly the opportunity to discuss their dying, what are we telling them? How might they feel if we refuse to share with them their thoughts about the last great event of their earthly existence? How can this be done helpfully and hopefully?

- H. Resurrection is the beginning of life forever.

"And after this I looked, and behold a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb'!" (rev. 7:9ff)

DISCUSSION: It is the destination which gives meaning and purpose to the journey. How does the promise of an eternal home effect the Christian pilgrim?

#### A Classic Prayer

"May He support us all the day long, till the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done! Then in His mercy may He give us a safe lodging, and holy rest, and peace at last." John Henry Newman

M.W. Brauer, Chaplain, Lutheran Health Care  
Association, St. Louis, Missouri

## APPENDIX N

## "Middle Time"

Between the exhilaration of Beginning  
and the satisfaction of Concluding  
is the Middle Time  
of enduring, changing, trying,  
despairing, continuing, becoming.

Jesus Christ was the man of God's Middle Time  
between Creation and...Accomplishment.  
Through him God said of Creation,  
"Without mistake."  
And of Accomplishment,  
"Without doubt."

And we in our Middle Times  
of wondering, waiting, hurrying,  
hesitating, regretting, revising;  
We who have begun many things-  
and seen but few completed;  
We who are becoming more-and less;  
through the evidence of God's Middle Time  
have a stabilizing hint  
that we are not mistakes,  
that we are irreplaceable,  
that our Being is of interest  
and our Doing is of purpose,  
that our Being and our Doing  
are surrounded by AMEN.

Jesus Christ is the Completer  
of unfinished people  
with unfinished work  
in unfinished times.

May he keep us from sinking, ceasing,  
wasting, solidifying-  
that we may be for him  
experimenters, enablers, encouragers,  
and associates in Accomplishment.

Lona Fowler, Activity magazine, published by the  
Congregational Board of Evangelism, Volume 6, 1968.

## APPENDIX O

RETIRE TO SERVE

## Ten Questions for Review of Attitude about Service

1. Do I recognize my gifts, talents, and abilities and utilize them fully?
2. Do I view life's events as opportunities to grow?
3. Do I have a commitment to a purpose?
4. Do I feel grounded, that my life has meaning?
5. Do I have vision for my life?
6. Do I have effective, satisfying daily self-management system?
7. Do I take the necessary risks to live the life I have imagined for myself?
8. Are my work life and personal life in balance?
9. Is there something, someone, in my life to which I am totally committed?
10. Have I ever felt a sense of personal responsibility for having the world be a better place to live?

Source Unknown

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