

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Doctor of Ministry Major Applied Project

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

5-19-2006

Toward a More Helpful Preaching Technique in the Nursing Home

Keith Schweitzer

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, keithlcms@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/dmin>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Schweitzer, Keith, "Toward a More Helpful Preaching Technique in the Nursing Home" (2006). *Doctor of Ministry Major Applied Project*. 210.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/dmin/210>

This Major Applied Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry Major Applied Project by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

TOWARD A MORE HELPFUL PREACHING TECHNIQUE
IN THE NURSING HOME

KEITH SCHWEITZER

APRIL 6, 2006

Concordia Seminary
Saint Louis, Missouri

Advisor (Glenn Nielsen, Ph.D.)

4/21/06

DATE

Reader (David Peter, D.Min.)

4/24/06

DATE

Director, Doctor of Ministry Program
(David Peter, D.Min.)

4/24/06

DATE

CONCORDIA SEMINARY

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

TOWARD A MORE HELPFUL PREACHING TECHNIQUE
IN THE NURSING HOME

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

DEPARTMENT OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

BY

KEITH SCHWEITZER

GREENFIELD, IOWA

APRIL 2006

Even to *your* old age, I *am* He,
And *even* to gray hairs I will carry *you!*
I have made, and I will bear;
Even I will carry, and will deliver *you.*

Isaiah 46:4 NKJV

To Susan with all my love and heartfelt appreciation for your unwavering support
during my pursuance of this doctoral degree

ABSTRACT

This Major Applied Project presents reminiscent preaching as a homiletical method to be used in a nursing home setting. As reminiscing is a common characteristic among the aged, applying it in the preaching ministry and worship activity among nursing home residents can serve the purpose of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in many helpful ways.

This MAP explains and presents examples of how reminiscing from the past in the lives of the residents draws forth vivid memories in their minds. Used as a method in preaching, these memories can also strengthen and deepen the faith of the aged individual who is nearing eternity.

Six sermons modeling this preaching method were written and delivered to the residents of the Greenfield Manor in Greenfield, Iowa between May and October in 2005. Interviews with several residents of the Greenfield Manor and detailed reviews of the sermons are included in this document.

CONTENTS

Chapter

1. THE INSTITUTIONALIZED AGED –
VETERAN WARRIORS OF THE CROSS1
 - The Problem Identified
 - Nursing Homes – They’re Not What They Used to Be
 - Theological Assumptions
 - The Purpose and Plan of This Major Applied Project
 - An Emergent Opportunity
2. HONORING THE AGED BY PREACHING SALVATION
SOLA GRATIA – THE SCRIPTURAL AND
CONFESSIONAL WITNESS15
 - The Spiritual Implications of the Project
 - Theological Basis for Preaching in an Institutionalized Setting
3. TOWARD MORE HELPFUL PREACHING
IN THE NURSING HOME28
 - Section I – Social Implications, Living in the Institutional Setting
 - Section II – Homiletical Implications, Reminiscent Preaching in the
Institutional Setting
4. CASE STUDIES OF THE RESIDENTS48
 - Case Study Summations
 - Case Study One – “My Congregation Died”
 - Case Study Two – “If You Promise to Marry Her”
 - Case Study Three – “We Were Afraid of the Klan”
 - Case Study Four – “I Worry About the Money”

Case Study Five – “It Was Not Considered Proper For a
Teacher to be Married”

Case Study Six – “I Was Born a Missouri Synod Lutheran
And I’ll Die a Missouri Synod Lutheran”

Case Study Seven – “We Bought the Sale Barn”

Case Study Eight – “Preaching is Men’s Work”

Case Study Nine – “Bow Your Back and Grit Your Teeth”

Case Study Ten – “I Was in Love”

5.	THE CHAPLAINS’ REVIEWS	70
6.	REMINISCENT PREACHING – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE	84

Appendix

A.	MODEL SERMONS WRITTEN AND DELIVERED FOR THE MAP	89
B.	CASE STUDY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS	102
C.	CHAPLAINS’ SERMON REVIEW AND ANALYSIS DOCUMENTS	130
D.	EARLY LIFE AND EARLY PASTORAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE AGED	138

CHAPTER ONE

THE INSTITUTIONALIZED AGED – VETERAN WARRIORS OF THE CROSS

The entire facility had the repugnant odor of incontinence, and many of the residents seemed to be in a perpetual state of semi-consciousness. Never had I seen so many wheel chairs in one place. Prosthetic devices were being used by some residents. In cases, I did not know the purpose these devices served. The interior hallways and the rooms coming off the hallways had the general appearance of a hospital. But the walls needed paint. The lighting was dim. The overall atmosphere was dismal and bleak. This long term care nursing facility within close proximity of my childhood home in Houston was a sad place. It was a setting in which the aged residents were essentially “warehoused” until they succumbed to their age and ultimately died.

In the spring and summer of 1971, I was visiting this nursing home every Wednesday afternoon. My purpose was to play a reel-to-reel tape of the sermon I had recorded during the divine service the previous Sunday. I was thirteen years old. I set up the tape recorder in the dining room in which the residents would eat their meals as well as participate in other activities. This room also was very dark. I had been instructed by a staff member that once I was ready to play the tape, she would make an announcement over the public address system. Slowly and quietly, residents began to assemble in the room waiting to listen to the tape. Some of the residents had a staff member help them

maneuver their wheel chairs or assist them in walking and sitting down. The assembly of these aged residents was very quiet. Nobody spoke to me and I did not speak to any of them.

My early experience with this group of aging residents had a profound impact on my life. Although, admittedly, I was a bit nervous in doing this weekly routine, I recall pondering several questions. Do these people come to listen to the taped sermons because they genuinely desire to hear a good word from the Lord? Are these residents able to go to church, or is this their only opportunity to have something that resembled worship? Although I was not leading the residents in devotional worship, I understood it was very important to them.

In my preparation for the ministry, I made it a point to continue serving the institutionalized aged, taking advantage of many opportunities while in college and at the seminary. It continues to be a high priority for me in my parish ministry. It also will be a growing facet of ministry that will occupy more of the pastor's time and attention in the future.

The Problem Identified

Pastors have a golden opportunity to engage in an aspect of ministry which carries with it amazing blessings as well as opportunities for tremendous professional and personal growth. Therefore, this project seeks to give careful, prayerful, and thoughtful reflection to preaching in the local nursing home. Preaching in the setting of the nursing home lends itself to many unique advantages and opportunities that can be carried over into the congregational setting. I have found that my preaching in our local nursing home in Greenfield, Iowa, has given me an extra opportunity each week to hone my preaching

skills in relation to my pastoral care of nursing home residents. This additional experience is invaluable in my overall development as a preacher.

However, the extra “practice” is not the principle reason for engaging in an active program of preaching within the setting of a group of elderly Christians in an assisted living or nursing facility. Rather, my intent is truly to minister to these older Christians in a more effective and meaningful way. The aging population in the United States is a rapidly growing segment of the total society. Ministry to these people will require much more of the pastor’s time, attention, and planning in the future.

However, search for a volume on preaching in the nursing home and a pastor searches in vain. At least this has been my experience over the past seven years. Perhaps one reason for the absence of literature pertaining to this topic is due to the low priority this aspect of pastoral ministry often receives.

Much of the time, the worship and preaching activity that takes place within a local nursing home is under the auspices of the local community ministerial association. Pastors of the respective denominational congregations in the local setting usually take turns on a “round robin” basis leading the worship service and delivering a brief homily. Unfortunately, many times the message is nothing more than a regurgitation of the Sunday morning sermon, and little effort is given to this aspect of their ministry.

However, the days of “winging it” during the Sunday afternoon worship devotions in which the local pastors take their respective turn on the calendar rotation in the local nursing home should end. The veteran warriors of the cross who are living the remaining years of their lives in some kind of long term care facility are deserving of intentional attention and consideration being made on their behalf. An era of carefully

and properly prepared worship services including high quality music and properly written sermons is needed. Pastors have the responsibility to serve the aged with thoughtful and well prepared ministry.

However, little help is available. After thoroughly searching libraries, websites, and periodicals, I could not find literature specifically addressing the preaching task as it relates to worship activity among the aged in the nursing home setting. The best I could do was survey the current literature on preaching and homiletical theory and apply it with literature relating to various aspects of life and spirituality of the aging, particularly in the assisted living/nursing home setting.

Therefore, in this Major Applied Project (MAP), I will attempt to identify a specific method of homiletical theory and practice, namely reminiscing and storytelling, that could be helpful within the context of an assisted living or nursing home setting. In seeking to discover a more helpful preaching technique in the nursing home, my prayer is that this MAP will encourage pastors to more closely examine their ministry efforts in the local nursing home.

Nursing Homes – They’re Not What They Used to Be

Rapid changes and dramatic developments have been occurring in the field of long term care for the aging population. No longer are facilities for the elderly simply modified “hospitals” offering only one kind of care. Care for the aging has now become highly specialized with various levels of service being offered depending on the physical and cognitive abilities of the individual person. The newest and by far the fastest growing aspect of care for the aging is that which is commonly known as “assisted living.”

The National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL) offers a concise profile of this new consumer-driven type of care.

Assisted living is a long term care alternative for seniors who need more assistance than is available in a retirement community but who do not require the heavy medical and nursing care provided in a nursing facility. While many seniors relocate to an assisted living residence after a period of rehabilitation in a nursing home or hospital, nearly half come directly from their homes.

Assisted living residences are designed to be operated, staffed, and maintained to best meet the needs and desires of their residents. Security and independence, privacy and companionship, and physical and social well-being are the primary characteristics of an assisted living setting. This accounts for its popularity among seniors and their families. Individuals receive, as needed, supervision, personal care assistance, and health care services that emphasize their right to control their lives.

Residents live in a congregate residential setting that generally provides personal services, 24-hour supervision and assistance, activities and health-related services designed to minimize the need to relocate; accommodate individual residents' changing needs and preferences; maximize residents' dignity, autonomy, privacy, independence, choice, safety, and; encourage family and community involvement.

Assisted living services are provided in freestanding facilities, on a campus with skilled nursing facilities or hospitals, as components of continuing care retirement communities, or as independent housing complexes.¹

In a 1998 study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, assisted living residences with a capacity of eleven or more beds were examined.² The study noted that the assisted living model is dynamic, and the range of services offered varies greatly. Assisted living residences typically provide or coordinate 24-hour supervision, three meals a day in a group dining room, and a range of services that promote resident quality of life and independence including personal care services (help with eating, bathing, dressing). Various health care services are provided along with

¹ Robert L. Mollica, *State Assisted Living Policy: 2000*, prepared by the National Academy for State Health Policy (Portland, Oregon, 2000), 2-3.

² Catherine Hawes, M. Rose, C. Phillips *A National Study of Assisted Living for the Frail Elderly: Results of a National Survey of Facilities*, prepared by the Office of Disability, Aging, and Long Term Care Policy, Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services and the Public Policy Institute Research Group (Washington D.C., 1999).

social services, supervision of persons with cognitive disabilities, social and religious activities, exercise and educational activities, arrangements for transportation, laundry and linen service, housekeeping and maintenance. Additional popular amenities such as recreation rooms, exercise rooms, outdoor gardens, libraries, and chapels may also be available depending on the residence.³

The scope of long term health care services now available is expanding to meet the needs of America's growing elderly population. Extended life expectancy and the graying of America are at the heart of the unprecedented demand for a variety of long term health care services. In 2000, about one in eight Americans was 65 or older. By 2030, it is estimated that approximately one in five will be aged 65 or older.⁴ Assisted living is a relatively new, widely popular consumer-oriented option. Consumers will continue to be attracted to assisted living because it offers independence, privacy, and personal care. Consumer demand for assisted living is expected to keep pace with the increase of the 75-years-or-older population.⁵

Although the fastest growing facet of care for the aging, assisted living is but one aspect of the rapidly developing field of care for the aged. With the onset of increased debilitation, an aging resident may be transferred into an intermediate level of assisted living that may include a scheduled regimen of prescribed medications being dispensed on a daily basis by a professional nurse. With this increased level of care may also come the need to assist the resident with eating, dressing, or preparing for bed. Intermediate

³ Ibid.

⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population Projections of the US by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin 1995-2000*, Current Population Reports, 2000 (Washington D.C., 2002), 25-30.

⁵ National Council for Assisted Living, *Assisted Living: Independence, Choice and Dignity* (Washington D.C., 2001) available from www.ncal.org; Internet.

care usually comes with a higher level of control and restriction placed upon the resident. Residents may not be permitted to leave the facility unless with a supervising family member. Unlike furnished apartments in an assisted living residence that may include kitchen facilities, intermediate care units usually do not include such facilities.

Further deterioration may ultimately lead to the resident being moved into a full skilled care nursing home environment in which the person may be totally unable to care for himself and requires full attention in all aspects of daily living. With the final months of life, the resident may come under the auspices of a local hospice facility or organization that seeks to provide the resident with the highest level of dignity possible through the moment of death. Additionally, facilities specifically designed to treat and care for residents with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD) are also common with assisted living facilities.

The dramatic changes that have occurred in the field of institutional care for the aging are to a large extent the result of increased expectations by family members for higher levels of quality of care and service for aging loved ones. These changes are also being driven further by the rapid growth of an older and "graying" population in the United States.

Theological Assumptions

Pertinent to this discussion are the theological underpinnings that apply in the pastor's ministry to the aged residents living in an assisted living/nursing home. One theological assumption is that pastoral ministry includes serving the aged because they are God's people. Whether they are sick, homebound, or are institutionalized, they are nonetheless part of the priesthood of all believers for whom Christ died. Our American

society is very youth-oriented where the desire to remain perpetually young drives many aspects of our consumer culture. Growing old is considered to be an unwelcome intrusion and a constant reminder of human mortality.

Human worth, however, is measured in God assigning and placing value in His creative, providential care, and His redemptive work in Christ Jesus. The pastor does well to remember three assumptions for ministry with the aging:

1. Older adults are individuals who share, with people of all ages, the same basic needs, desires, aspirations, and hopes.
2. Older adults have a right to expect and receive pastoral care (in all this entails) from their pastor and church.
3. Older adults offer great resources for a congregation because of their experience, time, and commitment.

The plaintiff cry of the psalmist, “Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone” (Psalm 71:9), finds response in the words of Isaiah, “Even to your old age and gray hairs I am He, I am He who will sustain you. I have made you, and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you (Isaiah 46.4).⁶

In considering the elderly specifically in an institutionalized setting, the pastor is often seen by the residents as being their link between themselves and God. The pastor who serves the resident in the nursing home is more than likely the last “ambassador” of Christ to assist the aged resident in preparing for heaven. This ministry can take on such facets as administering the Sacrament, visiting with family members, and bringing care and comfort during the final moments before death occurs.

As this applies to the preaching task in the context of worship in an institution for the aged, the Lutheran pastor is always mindful of the central role the sermon plays in worship. For in the sermon, as a means of grace, Jesus speaks and God, through the Holy

⁶ Norbert H. Mueller and George Kraus, *Pastoral Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1990), 135.

Spirit, pours out His gifts of faith, forgiveness, salvation, and heaven. The proclamation of Christ crucified is as important for the aged as for any believer. The sermon is literally “front and center” in Lutheran worship in any setting.

A second theological assumption stems from the scant literature on the topic of helpful preaching in the nursing home. The literature does not by any means speak with the same voice or reach the same conclusion. In an article written in *The Journal of Pastoral Care*, Jean Clayton writes of her tenure as the chaplain of St. Mary’s Hospital in London, Ontario, Canada. In her article, she describes a novel approach to providing a meaningful worship service for Alzheimer’s patients in which greater stress is placed upon familiar Scripture, music, prayers, and other right-brain functions, but no sermon or homily whatsoever. She writes:

Among the many books and articles through which I searched for answers to this problem [improving life and attendance at institutional chapel services] was a small book called *Ministry of Love*, by S.V. Doughty.⁷ In a similar search for ways to enthuse his congregation of seniors, Mr. Doughty had discovered that the most successful format for his services involved familiar short scripture passages, familiar hymns, and a time of prayer. No message, sermon, homily, or talk!

Since most of us who lead worship put a good deal of effort into this part of the service, and think of it as important, this discovery was quite disconcerting. One supervisor had even told me that a sermon was as vital to an ecumenical service as consecration was to a communion service. Perhaps this was so in the community, yet my experience did not bear this out in our chapel services.

Further reading shed some light on this seeming contradiction. Since the “message” is meant to be largely interpretative or instructional, the logical functions of the left-brain are called into action – functions no longer easily accessed by many elders, particularly the memory impaired. Yet, familiar scripture, music, prayers, and symbols retain their power to touch many of the same people, through the feeling functions of the right-brain. This approach matched that of many Alzheimer’s caregivers who used music, aroma, touch, and

⁷ S.V. Doughty, *Ministry of Love* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1984).

other emotionally powerful ways of “reaching” patients long after all memory had failed.⁸

Clayton’s assertion that the sermon or homily should be done away within a worship service in the nursing home is made in reference to those with Alzheimer’s disease and on the basis that the left side of the brain cannot process what is being said. This MAP takes an opposite approach and advocates preaching to the aged because of the Lutheran theology of the Word. Preaching is an opportunity to bring the means of grace to the listeners for the Holy Spirit to work in the listeners’ lives.

In other words, a second theological assumption is that the preached word is effective in conveying God’s grace upon the hearers. Glenn Nielsen strongly affirms the efficacy of the Word of God as capable of working in the hearts of people when and where God pleases.⁹ To assume an incapacitated or a demented person cannot benefit from a well proclaimed sermon is to relegate the power of God and the Holy Spirit to being held hostage both by the proclaimer and the hearer. Nielsen makes a very important point in reminding the Lutheran preacher of what is occurring when the Word of God is proclaimed.

The role of both the preacher and listener is thus defined in the context of this use of the means of grace.

The most explicit section of the Lutheran Confessions in this regard is the Formula of Concord’s section concerning free will. Indeed, the writers declare that they will ‘now set forth from the Word of God how man is converted to God, how and by what means (namely, the oral Word and the holy Sacraments) the Holy Spirit wills to be efficacious in us by giving and working true repentance, faith, and new spiritual power and ability for good in our hearts, and *how we are to relate ourselves to and use these means* (530.48). The argument goes as follows:

⁸ Jean Clayton, “Let There Be Life: An Approach to Worship with Alzheimer’s Patients and Their Families” *The Journal of Pastoral Care* (Summer 1991) : 178.

⁹ Glenn Nielsen, “No Longer Dinosaurs: Relating Lutheran Homiletics and Communication Practice” *Concordia Journal* (January 1999) : 19.

- God desires all to be saved.
- To this end, God provides for public proclamation of the Gospel and gathers the church to Himself.
- God's will is that He draw people to Himself through means: Word and Sacraments.
- All who would be saved must hear this preaching, for the preaching and hearing of God's Word are the Holy Spirit's instrument in, with, and through which He acts efficaciously.
- Through these means God is active to effect repentance and conversion.
- When the Word is preached pure and unalloyed and when people gently and earnestly listen to and meditate on the Word, God is present with grace to give His gifts.
- A person can resist God's grace, despising the Word by not hearing or reading it.¹⁰

Paul's declarative that "faith comes by hearing and hearing through the word of God" (Romans 10:17) does not carry any age limitations. Neither does it imply that any person is somehow incapable of receiving God's promised blessings. The word of God communicated well in the sermon is indeed a means of grace for all people, for all times, for all ages.

The Purpose and Plan of This Major Applied Project

This MAP follows a specific outline of development. As previously stated, the MAP is intended to examine more closely the preaching task, particularly as it relates to the formal worship services within the context of the assisted living/nursing home. Six sermons were prepared and delivered during six worship services at the Greenfield Manor in Greenfield, Iowa, between May and October 2005. Manuscripts of these six sermons are included with this document.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ The sermon manuscripts are located in Appendix A.

Qualitative research was carried out by conducting personal interviews with ten residents of the Greenfield Manor who, along with their immediate family member care givers, gave permission to participate in this MAP. These residents provided valuable feedback and fascinating glimpses into their personal lives as well as helpful suggestions as to how I may improve my preaching in nursing home worship services. Transcripts of these interviews are also included, along with case study summations and basic biographical and spiritual profiles of each of the ten residents.

In addition to the resident interviews, this MAP also features critical evaluations given by three institutional chaplains who viewed two of the six sermons written and delivered for this project. Summations of their evaluations are included in chapter five and the full texts of the evaluations follow in a concluding appendix.¹² The purpose of the interviews and evaluations is to serve as an introductory model in seeking to discover a more helpful preaching technique in the nursing home. The residents and staff at the Greenfield Manor were most pleased to be serving as the “laboratory” for this MAP. As I have been working with the residents and staff for four years, a genuine pastoral relationship has emerged. I believe this helped to facilitate a meaningful MAP. The results of the special sermons and the individual interviews revealed ways in which pastors may be able to minister to nursing home residents more effectively now and in the future.

As to how this MAP is structured, chapter two contains the Biblical and Confessional evidence for honoring and serving the aged. Chapter three explores the social and homiletical parameters as they pertain to preaching in the nursing home. Also,

¹² The full text of the sermon evaluations from the three institutional chaplains are located in Appendix C.

the homiletical model of reminiscent preaching will be detailed. In the fourth chapter, case study summations from interviews conducted with ten residents living in the Greenfield Manor appear as part of the qualitative research conducted for this MAP. A brief analysis of the insights offered by the residents regarding the six sermons delivered is included. Chapter five includes an examination of the critical analysis offered by three institutional chaplains on two of the sermons that were video taped and viewed. Finally, chapter six considers implications for this type of preaching ministry in the future.

An Emergent Opportunity

In a recent document, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Aging (AOA) concluded that a child born in 2002 can expect to live 77.3 years, about 30 years longer than a child born in 1900. Much of this increase occurred because of reduced death rates for children and young adults. However, the period of 1980-2002 also has seen reduced death rates for the population aged 65-84, especially for men – by 30.4 percent for men aged 65-74 and by 23.3 percent for men aged 75-84. Life expectancy at age 65 increased by only 2.5 years between 1900 and 1960, but has increased by 3.9 years from 1960 to 2002.¹³

Over 2.0 million persons celebrated their 65th birthday in 2003. In the same year, about 1.8 million persons 65 or older died. Census estimates showed an annual net increase of over 317,000 in the number of persons 65 and over. There were 50,639 persons aged 100 or more in 2003 (0.17 percent of the total population). This is a 36 percent increase from the 1990 figure of 37,306. The AOA profile goes on to project that the growth of the aging population will literally explode as the “baby boom”

¹³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, *A Profile of Older Americans: 2004* (Washington D.C., 2004) available from www.aoa.gov; Internet.

generation reaches 65 with this age group representing 20 percent of the total population by 2030.¹⁴

The ramifications for ministry to this age group are enormous and very much deserving of focused attention. This MAP seeks to make only a small and initial contribution. Aside from this being an area of ministry that is of particular and personal interest, this is a facet of ministry those in The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod simply must face. The need is great. The opportunities are immense. The blessings are abundant.

¹⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO
HONORING THE AGED BY PREACHING SALVATION *SOLA GRATIA* –
THE SCRIPTURAL AND CONFSSIONAL WITNESS

The Spiritual Implications of the Project

Nursing home staffs are responsible for the well being of the residents. This includes providing a clean and safe environment, nutritious meals, personal hygiene, and medical assistance, as well as a program of recreational, social, and spiritual activities. The staff is also responsible to comply with very rigid accreditation procedures which involves an annual inspection by the state accrediting agency. The pay rate for nursing home employees is generally low and results in a high level of employee turnover. Staff members truly appreciate pastoral volunteers and others from the local congregations who assist with the care of the residents.¹⁵

Residents inevitably experience “culture shock” when they enter a care center. They face the challenge of adjusting to a dramatically different environment from which they are accustomed and this at an age in their lives when change can be very difficult and frightening. They often struggle with the stereotype of “moving into the old folks’ home.” They can view this as a blow to their sense of pride and self-respect. Usually, by the time the resident arrives in the care center, many of those aspects of life that signify their sense of freedom and independence have been taken away from them. Except in a

¹⁵ Bill Goodrich and Tom McCormick, *Nursing Home Ministry Where Hidden Treasures Are Found* (Avon Lake, Ohio: God Cares Ministry, 2003), 16.

few cases related to assisted living situations, the person is no longer able to drive. Even the most basic aspects of life such as bathing, cooking, gardening and other daily activities have now become more difficult and sometimes impossible to do. This can lead to frustration and even denial as they must accept that they are getting older and are no longer able to do those things which are most loved and enjoyed.

For many of these residents, their church and home congregation had a dominant place in their lives. Regular attendance in the congregation with people they loved is now no longer possible. They feel a sense of abandonment that can quickly lead to despair and depression. For these residents, simply visiting them can provide a much desired opportunity for conversation and fellowship. Likewise, opportunities to share the faith both with Christians and non-Christians alike abound. Often, residents are considering their own mortality and the fact that their remaining years are few. Older residents who previously have had no interest in the faith or the church may now have such interest.¹⁶

Family members are also most appreciative and have told me on several occasions how they are comforted by the fact their loved one has the opportunity to attend a worship service that truly resembles regular worship. Subsequently, family members may also be receptive to a Gospel witness when they have not been previously. Specifically, the Lutheran pastor has countless opportunities to share the Gospel of Christ that comes “*sola gratia.*”

Ministry to the aging in care facilities is a fertile area in which the Word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ can be brought to many people either to confirm them in their faith or to introduce them to the faith. As I have learned in my ministry in various

¹⁶ Ibid., 17.

care facility settings, the pastor in leading worship and preaching the Gospel has many advantages that he may not necessarily enjoy in a regular parish or congregational setting. He leads a group of people who genuinely desire to be in worship. Consequently, they are very attentive to what the pastor has to say. They are not disruptive or misbehaved. By virtue of the fact they are a “captive” audience, they place a tremendous trust in the pastor that he will proclaim the truth from the Word of God to them and not deceive them and endanger their souls with false doctrine. For this purpose and to this end, this MAP seeks to address an aspect of ministry that is both critical and also very exciting and filled with opportunities. Helpful preaching to the aging in the nursing home setting brings with it many wonderful blessings and has a rich theological grounding.

Theological Basis for Preaching in an Institutionalized Setting

In the rite of ordination for the office of the ministry in The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, the pastoral candidate subscribes his faithfulness and promise to the following series of interrogatives:

Will you faithfully instruct both young and old in the chief articles of Christian doctrine; will you forgive the sins of those who repent, and will you promise never to divulge the sins confessed to you; will you minister faithfully to the sick and dying; will you demonstrate to the Church a constant and ready ministry, admonishing the people to a lively confidence in Christ and holy living?¹⁷

This section of the rite of ordination certainly carries with it the implication that instructing both “young and old” means more than simply teaching junior and adult confirmation classes. It means the called servant is willing to instruct anyone of any age in the chief articles of Christian doctrine.

¹⁷ The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, The Commission on Worship, *Lutheran Agenda* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 212.

Likewise, ministering faithfully to the sick and dying carries with it much more than being at a Christian's death bed. Often a pastor ministers to those who are elderly or sick and dying from a terminal disease for a considerable number of years. Even though ministering to the elderly is not stated directly within this section of the ordination rite, it is certainly implicit within the words, "minister faithfully to the sick and dying."

Besides the ordination vow, the residents often desire the word brought to them. In the New King James Version, the Scriptures state:

"Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it."
(Proverbs 22:6)¹⁸

This verse bespeaks of a person's life both at its beginning and at the end. Responsibility to instruct the children in all matters pertaining to life rests primarily with the parents. However, the church is involved in this instruction as well, and includes life in this world as well as spiritual matters pertaining to eternal life.

Therefore, as children are to be brought up in the truth and knowledge of the Lord, so the Scriptures attest that this teaching will not depart for them. This is particularly true when a person becomes of significant age when they are "old and advanced in years." With increased age comes increased wisdom. I have seen it demonstrated time and again of the senior saints who reside in the nursing home that they are indeed filled with wisdom and knowledge of life and of spiritual matters. They were taught well in their childhood and youth.

Sunday morning worship and Sunday school was a regular, constitutive activity that began each new week. The father led the family in prayer and also in family

¹⁸ *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Word Bibles, 1997), 908. All references will be from this translation.

devotions. The mother likewise led the children in prayer and in the learning of Bible stories. Though there may have been a time when the residents in the nursing home may have “felt their oats,” the truths of the Christian faith were obviously so well engrained into their memories that they literally became second nature to them. However, this does not mean we stop ministering to them. Their faithfulness earnestly seeks more instruction, more comfort, more Gospel. If anything, their increased wisdom is an increase in depending on Jesus. Therefore, our care to these faithful servants is just as important in their old age as in their youth.

It is not just our ordination vows or the residents’ desire for spiritual care that leads to faithful preaching in the nursing home. The Scriptures are replete with passages pertaining to care for the aging and elderly. St. Paul cited in his epistle to the Ephesians the Fourth Commandment,

“Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

(Ephesians 6:2-3)

The commandment does not make any stipulation regarding age. As a Christian, we are to honor our father and mother during their entire life. In the Large Catechism, Luther writes:

First, then, learn what this commandment requires concerning honor to parents. You are to esteem them above all things and to value them as the most precious treasure on earth. Second, in your words you are also to behave respectfully toward them and are not to speak discourteously to them, to criticize them, or to take them to task, but rather to submit to them and hold your tongue, even if they should go too far. Third, you are also to honor them by your actions, that is, with your body and possessions, serving them, helping them, and caring for them when they are old, sick, feeble, or poor; all this you should do not only cheerfully, but also with humility and reverence, doing it as if for God. Those who know how to cherish their parents in their hearts will not let them endure

want or hunger, but will place them above and beside themselves and share with them all they have to the best of their ability.¹⁹

However, it is not just for parents. Indeed, the Scriptures often speak of the honor due to the elderly and the gratitude they are to be shown in general.

“You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I *am* the LORD.”

(Leviticus 19:32)

“Hear, *my* children, the instruction of a father, And give attention to know understanding;

For I give you good doctrine:
Do not forsake my law.

When I was my father's son,
Tender and the only one in the sight of my mother,
He also taught me, and said to me:

“Let your heart retain my words;
Keep my commands, and live.”

(Proverbs 4:1-4)

“The silver-haired head *is* a crown of glory.

If it is found in the way of righteousness.”

(Proverbs 16:31)

“The glory of the young men *is* their strength,

And the glory of the old men *is* their gray head.”

(Proverbs 20:29)

The Biblical witness to the respect and care given to elderly is especially pertinent for women, particularly the widow. Usually more than seventy percent of the residents in a nursing home or in another specialized care facility are women.²⁰ These women are also predominately widows who have lost their husbands and the support which their husbands were able to provide.²¹ The Scriptures say older, widowed women are not to be

¹⁹ Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, *The Book of Concord, The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 401.

²⁰ National Center for Health Statistics, *Nursing Home Care, 2004* (Washington D.C., 2004) available from www.cdc.gov/nchs; Internet.

²¹ *Ibid.*

afflicted. Also forbidden is taking advantage of the widow. St. Paul devotes a large section of his first epistle to Timothy to this very subject:

“Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God. Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. And these things command, that they may be blameless. But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

(1 Timothy 5:3-8)

In rebuking Judah of its sin and apostasy, God through the prophet Isaiah admonishes Judah.

“Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;
Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes.
Cease to do evil,
Learn to do good;
Seek justice,
Rebuke the oppressor;
Defend the fatherless;
Plead for the widow.”

(Isaiah 1:16-17)

To serve the widow and to plead her case is certainly part of the call to ministry in the nursing home. For example, in addition to leading the residents of the Greenfield Manor in worship each week, I also serve on the Greenfield Manor’s ombudsman committee. This committee is to be a voice for the residents and to advocate their complaints or grievances to both the staff at the facility as well as to the government agencies that govern and regulate nursing homes and extended care facilities. Through my ombudsman work, I seek to serve the widow and plead her case.

Another Scriptural example of how the aged are to be treated is when confronting an older person with sin. The older sinning person is to be shown respect by not being addressed with harsh words. St. Paul instructs Timothy that although he is to confront an older man or an older woman in the faith with their sin as with any other person, he is nonetheless to do so in this way.

“Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.”

(1 Timothy 5:1-2)

As all Christians are accountable for their lives of faith and for their sin, so this is true for those who are elderly as well. But in being held accountable, the elderly are still treated with dignity and care.

The Scriptural evidence is indeed impressive, and this study is by no means exhaustive. God has made it abundantly clear that we as Christians and pastors are to attend to the care of the aged. We are to hold them up in very high esteem and respect. We are to honor them and see to it that they are not mistreated. As Christians, living in sanctified peace and in the redemptive work of Christ in the cross, this ministry to the aged is indeed a joy and carries with it the promise of God’s rich and abundant blessings.

In addition to honoring the elderly in general, the pastor as preacher has the responsibility to proclaim faithfully the Gospel to all people, including those in institutionalized care. Here again, the Scriptures have much to say. God places a very high value and importance on preaching in the life of believers and non-believers alike.²²

²² Again, from Isaiah, this very powerful and proleptic declarative is spoken in the first person. Luther believed it was the pre-incarnate Christ as Jesus applied these verses to Himself in the synagogue at Nazareth in Luke 4:21. MacArthur, 1049.

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me,
Because the LORD has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound;

To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,
And the day of vengeance of our God:
To comfort all who mourn,
To console those who mourn in Zion,
To give them beauty for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
That they may be called trees of righteousness,
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”

(Isaiah 61:1-3)

The word for preaching (*bâsar*, in the Piel form) carries with it the specific meaning of good tidings to gladden the heart.²³ Spoken to the Israelites in the dispersion following the Babylonian captivity, these verses carry the eschatological hope and promise of the coming Savior and Messiah. This section of Scripture relates to the powerful impact of preaching. It carries the promise of God to gladden hearts which in turn produces hope and anticipation. Preaching can be a means of God’s grace. As the good news reaches the hearts and ears of the hearer, so also comes with it the Holy Spirit to produce and sustain saving faith and a gladsome heart.

Paul speaks of this power and promise of preaching:

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

*‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,
Who bring glad tidings of good things!’*

²³ Francis Brown, editor, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 142.

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, '*Lord, who has believed our report?*' So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"
(Romans 10:14-17)

Likewise, when Paul commissions Timothy in his ministry of preaching, he declares the benefits of this ministry activity.

“Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

(2 Timothy 4:2-5)

The preaching in the New Testament is characteristic of heralding good news.

This news warms the heart and fills the soul with joy (Luke 2:10-13; Luke 24:32). It is news that creates, sustains, and nurtures saving faith. These blessings are bestowed.

When the good news of salvation of Jesus Christ is proclaimed, the preaching is the proclamation of that Gospel. As the preacher proclaims Christ, it is nothing less than Christ speaking. Luther proclaimed in an Ascension Day service:

“If you preach faith, people become lax, want to do no good, serve and help no one. But if you do not preach faith, hearts become frightened and dejected and establish one idolatrous practice after another. Do as you please; nothing seems to help. Yet faith in Christ should and must be preached, no matter what happens. I would much rather hear people say to me that I preach too sweetly and that my sermon hinders people in doing good works (although it does *not* do so) than not preach faith in Christ at all; for then there would be no help for timid, frightened consciences.

I see and experience this: He is a man who is lax and lazy, who falsely boasts of faith and says that he relies on the grace and mercy of God and that these will no doubt help him even though he clings to sins. But as soon as death comes to him, it appears that he has never really grasped and believed the grace and mercy of God. Therefore one will have enough to do to cheer and comfort him, even though he has not practiced any particular idolatry. But when the message of faith has been extinguished and the heart is completely swamped with sadness, there is neither counsel nor help. Say something about grace to such a heart, and it will answer: You preach much to me about grace and mercy; but if

you felt what I feel, you would speak differently. So a frightened, inconsolable heart goes on. I have heard people speak like this when I tried to comfort them. Therefore I should like to have the message of faith in Christ not forgotten but generally known. It is so sweet a message, full of sheer joy, comfort, mercy, and grace. I must confess that I myself have as yet not fully grasped it. We shall have to let it happen that some of our people turn the message into an occasion for security and presumption; but others, the work-righteous, slander us on this account and say that we make people lazy and thus keep them from reaching perfection. Christ Himself had to hear that He was a friend of publicans and sinners (Luke 15:2), that He broke the Sabbath, etc. We shall not fare any better.”²⁴

These are the promised blessings from God that come from the proclaimed word. Such good news is so welcome in a worship setting in the nursing home. The residents in a nursing home are literally captive to their environment. As residents arrive at the nursing home, they are called upon to adjust to a dramatically different environment. This adjustment occurs at a time in a person’s life when change is particularly difficult. Every aspect of the person’s life is altered. Thus the need for good news in the midst of what could be a very dreary life leaves the typical nursing home resident most receptive to a joyful proclamation of the Gospel of salvation in Christ.

Indeed, I have found this to be the case in worship services I have led and sermons that I have delivered in the nursing home. Residents usually flock to hear the gospel of Christ proclaimed. They are perhaps more than any other group of people in any other setting in which I have preached most filled with joy to hear of their salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. Arguably, they are the people closest to receiving their glorification.

Therefore, the Lutheran pastor has the unique opportunity to be the pastor and teacher who has “the last word” in the lives of the residents in the nursing home. As

²⁴ Edward M. Plass, *What Luther Says A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 1128-1129.

such, the Lutheran pastor has opportunity and responsibility to proclaim the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Proclaiming salvation as coming through grace alone in the Lord Jesus Christ would be very good news indeed. And very much needed!

At the Greenfield Manor, the residents come from Roman Catholic, Methodist, or Lutheran backgrounds, with Catholics and Methodists comprising the majority. This situation provides a fertile ground for preaching *sola gratia, sole fide, sola scriptura*. It is a great joy and privilege to know the residents are hearing the sweet Gospel of salvation that has been accomplished for them apart from any good work from them. The Lutheran Confessions clearly state the need for effective preaching and bespeak of its importance and usefulness. In the Large Catechism, Luther writes:

As in other matters that have to do with faith, love, and patience, it is not enough just to teach and to instruct, but there must also be daily exhortation, so that on this subject we must be persistent in preaching, lest people become indifferent and bored. For we know and feel how the devil always sets himself against this and every other Christian activity, hounding and driving people from it as much as he can.²⁵

Further, in the Smalcald Articles, Luther writes:

We now want to return to the gospel, which gives guidance and help against sin in more than one way, because God is extravagantly rich in his grace: first, through the spoken word, in which the forgiveness of sins is preached to the whole world (which is the proper function of the gospel); second, through baptism; third, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar; fourth, through the power of the keys and also through the mutual conversation and consolation of brothers and sisters. Matthew 18[:20]: “Where two or three are gathered . . .²⁶

Preaching both Law and Gospel also takes on a very interesting characteristic as it is applied to a congregation of senior saints who gather for worship in the nursing home.

As the relationship between the residents and me began to develop, they became less

²⁵ Kolb, 471.

²⁶ Ibid., 319.

afraid of the Law and more receptive to the Gospel. For some of the residents, they were hearing about the graciousness and goodness of God of which they had not previously heard. Perhaps for this reason they are so eager to come to the worship service.

Preaching Law and Gospel to the elderly in the nursing home carries with it the promise of the truth of salvation being planted deeply within very fertile soil. It is an aspect of a pastor's parish ministry which promises abundant blessings and joy for him and the lives of those he touches.

In summary, the rite of ordination for the Lutheran pastor carries with it the mandate to serve and minister to the sick and dying. In preaching, the pastor brings the Gospel of Christ to all people regardless of their age. The power of preaching does not discriminate. God works through the spoken word when and where He pleases.

Residents in the local nursing home enjoy this promise as well. Likewise, residents in the nursing home are sinners and are in need of forgiveness that comes in Christ. To bring this message of salvation and heaven to God's aging people is a responsibility and privilege for the pastor.

CHAPTER THREE

TOWARD MORE HELPFUL PREACHING IN THE NURSING HOME

Literature specifically relating homiletics and preaching within the context of devotions or worship services in a nursing home is difficult to find. I found almost none. As a result, for this paper, the two disciplines will be considered separately with conclusions subsequently being drawn forth. In particular, I will seek to relate the two in terms of the value of story telling and reminiscing for preaching in the nursing home setting. I begin with the characteristics of residents in the nursing home today.

Section I – Social Implications, Living in the Institutional Setting

Most of the residents currently in institutional settings (hospitals, assisted living and nursing homes) were born in the twentieth century between 1910 and 1925.²⁷ Despite being labeled the “greatest generation” and comprised of individuals who lived through the Great Depression and World War II, the residents in the Greenfield Manor are surprisingly “postmodern.” By this I mean they are like postmoderns who value community, faith, and storytelling.

Graham Johnston describes how in preaching to a postmodern generation, the pastor should be aware that his hearers come from an era that has witnessed the

²⁷ A simple survey of the residents in the Greenfield Manor demonstrated that their dates of birth fell within this time frame in the early part of the 20th century. This makes most of the residents to be between 81 and 96 years old.

breakdown of the nuclear family.²⁸ What the aged in the nursing home have in common with many generation Xers is the desire for acceptance and belonging that stems from the loneliness and alienation of splintered and broken family attachments.²⁹ Contrary to moderns giving importance on the individual, the aging residents have been a people within a close-knit community.³⁰ Family is and has always been very important. The fact that residents in the nursing home are more susceptible to depression is caused to a large extent because they find themselves separated from their families.³¹ Community within the nursing home is thus greatly emphasized as a characteristic of healthy living within the facility. Aged residents are remarkably forgiving of family members who either perpetrate or are victims of broken relationships within the family.³² Characteristic also of the aged in their postmodernity is the dispelling of the expectation that “everything will get better.”³³ The aged are not fooled by “appearances that count for everything” among younger people.³⁴ Aged residents are mindful that the genuinely important aspects of life can be summed up easily by rejoicing in their “faith, family, freedom.”³⁵

²⁸ Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Postmodern World, A Guide to Reaching Twenty-First Century Listeners* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2001), 55.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Goodrich, 30.

³¹ Ibid., 17.

³² Ibid., 18.

³³ Johnston, 56.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Goodrich, 39.

Nursing home residents are mostly also people of great faith who seek a steady diet of truth that comes from the Scriptures. Pamela Lynn Schultz-Hipp asserts that differences in the importance of religion also exist between age groups. Findings from various Gallup Polls in 1993 show that among adults under age thirty only 32 percent attended church or synagogue on a typical week compared with 53 percent of those age sixty-five and older. These older adults also feel religion is very important in their own lives compared to adults younger than sixty-five.

The general pattern of highest religiosity among the elderly on almost all measures has remained the same year after year when similar questions are asked. They are confirmed by parallel findings from other national polls. For example, the 1993 and 1994 surveys of the Barna Research Group (Barna, 1994) showed that respondents aged sixty-seven plus were more likely than young and middle-aged Americans to believe that . . . religion is very important in their lives.³⁶

Further, analysis of data from a large 1994 national survey in The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod revealed that women aged 65 and over ranked highest in church attendance, personal prayer, importance of religious beliefs, biblical knowledge, serving others, personal faith, and other components of spirituality.³⁷ These characteristic traits seem to be true within the context of a nursing home as the majority of residents in nursing homes are women. There are also hints from other research that as people age, their levels of spirituality are more likely to rise than fall, even though on the crude measures used in research to date the largest proportion show no obvious change.³⁸

³⁶ Pamela Lynn Schultz-Hipp and David O. Moberg, Editor, *Aging and Spirituality, Spiritual Dimensions of Aging Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* (Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 2001), 85.

³⁷ David O Moberg, *Women of God: An Assessment of the Spirituality of Women in The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod* (St. Louis, MO: Lutheran Women's Missionary League, 1994).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

The majority of residents who today reside in the nursing home are people who lived through the Great Depression and World War II. These two events particularly stand out and have made indelible images onto the minds and memories of most residents today. However, as the statistics bear witness, most of the residents in nursing homes are women. Further, in the small town setting of Greenfield, Iowa, most of the residents come from a rural background. These were people who made their living from the ground under very difficult conditions. The preacher, in addition to needing to know the historical basics of these two major national events, also needs to know the basics of these events as they apply to the “home front.” The perspective of World War II is very different for the women who stayed behind while the men went to Europe or to the Pacific theatre. Women, in addition to working on the farm, also worked in the factories to build the armaments. They planted gardens to raise vegetables that were then used in the war effort. Women knitted socks to be worn by the men in the armed forces. Women lived every day in fear and dread of the military officer in the green sedan who would drive to the farm to bring the news of a loved one killed in battle.³⁹

However, in my preaching in the nursing home, I have also found, perhaps contrary to the prevailing view, that nursing home residents do not live singularly in the past. They are also very interested in what is happening today. As this MAP is being written, the dramatic and devastating aftermath of hurricane Katrina is prominent in the news. The residents in the Greenfield Manor are watching the news coverage of the tremendous destruction in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. They will be seeking words of comfort from the Scriptures by the preacher as they ask the very Lutheran

³⁹ Michael E. Haskew, *The World War II Desk Reference* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2004), 397.

question, “What does this mean?” Is this God’s judgment upon us? Is this God’s retribution upon the debauchery of the people of New Orleans? The residents will be very interested and wanting to hear what I have to say to them when we meet for worship again. What is my interpretation of these events? What stories do I have to tell? Do I have memories of the hurricane that hit Houston when I was a child? Bryan Chapell writes:

Preachers should be continually taking snapshots of both life’s great and commonplace events so that they may relate both to the awe and to the tedium of their listener’s experience. Nothing of life goes by without examination. If you hope to illustrate well, do not wait passively for the world to offer you something significant of note. Rather, steal from the world the treasures others do not notice or do not have the opportunity to display.⁴⁰

However, as important as the present events in life may be, the aged are particularly characterized by the desire and need to reminisce. For the aged Christian, their sense of self-worth is precious to them. Residents in the Greenfield Manor, as with other aging Christians, are very willing and wanting to share vignettes of their life’s experiences with virtually anyone who is willing to listen. Once arriving in the nursing home, most residents feel a sense of failure. Their lives which had meaning and the amazing things they had accomplished particularly during difficult times may no longer be of any interest to anyone. The fear of forgetting and the need to remember both mark the later years of life. This fear and need spring from the same truth. Memory is more than a resource for efficient living or a reservoir of colorful and entertaining stories. Memory enables all people regardless of age to hold fast to their identity and shape it in new ways.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Bryan Chapell, *Using Illustrations to Preach with Power* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2001), 14.

⁴¹ Kathleen Fischer, *Winter Grace, Spirituality and Aging* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998), 44.

Beneath the annoyance we experience of not being able to recall names and dates or find our glasses is the nagging fear that some part of us as a person is slipping away. Not only is memory fundamental to personal identity, it is central to religious identity as well. Memory reveals God's presence in our life. A group of older adults in a poetry reading assembly made this important point. In her book *Winter Grace, Spirituality and Aging*, Kathleen Fischer tells the story:

[A woman in the poetry group] brought a poem called 'The House where I Was Born' to a session. As we discussed the poem, a woman in her early nineties told us that her mother had died in childbirth, so she had never really known her. But she remembered the little house where she had lived with her father and stepmother. When she was eight years old, her stepmother became very ill and she still remembered vividly her father's hoarse voice calling from her stepmother's bedside, 'She's gone.' As the woman shared these memories, tears welled up in her eyes, and she began to cry. We were all silent, realizing how present the moment from eighty years past was to her. Then I said to her, 'Those are painful memories.' She stopped crying, looked up, and almost defiantly replied: 'Those are *sacred* memories.' The woman next to her added, 'Those are *holy* memories. We need such memories.'⁴²

During recent decades, this experience of remembering has become a focus of interest among professionals working with older adults. Robert N. Butler, a psychiatrist who has written extensively on topics related to aging, believes that the experience of reviewing one's life is universal among older people.⁴³ Butler sees life review as a looking back which is set in motion by looking forward to death. It accounts for the increased reminiscing which he believes characterizes the later years. The process of reviewing our lives can result in increased candor, serenity, and wisdom. It can lead to the expiation of guilt, the reconciliation of relationships, and the resolution of inner conflicts.

⁴² Ibid., 46.

⁴³ Robert N. Butler, *Why Survive? Being Old in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 410.

Recalling unresolved conflicts, on the other hand, or past inadequacies can also lead to depression, anxiety, and a sense that our lives have been a waste. Erik H. Erikson believes that such failure to accept one's life cycle leads to fear of death and a despair that will often be expressed in disgust with everything.⁴⁴ A faith perspective is crucial if remembering is indeed to result in integrity and peace.

Fischer tells the story of a woman (Maria) who wrote of her life as being a faithful confession of God:

One day there came a telegram from the Netherlands. It read: 'Father seriously sick.' The next day another telegram: 'Father died peacefully.' It felt like a bomb had fallen in our little world and shattered it all to pieces. We could not go back; we had to stay in this land we had freely chosen, live among people we did not understand, neither were we understood by them.

That evening I was brought to the hospital and lost our baby, a miscarriage. I could fold my hands and close my eyes but no words, no thoughts, only emptiness – silence. I did not search for communion with God. He seemed so far. Our family had said when we left: 'Remember, there are planes. You can come back, you are not in a concentration camp.' And now, at this time, I wanted to go back, but I could not, even though there were planes. It was not that simple.

Yet God restores and heals. We experienced this in the fullest measure. We lived for two years on the prairie. We had a large garden and ate all that it provided. We saved almost every penny, we were so longing to leave the hog ranch.

Every evening, we went through the garbage for milk glass and dream bottles. These we sold in the little country store and in turn were able to buy bananas and oranges for the little girl God gave us one year after my miscarriage.⁴⁵

As Maria sets forth in her life story, faith is the recounting of God's presence in our journey through time. Recounting God's presence is especially true for the aged who experience their temporality more fully. Story is an essential way to capture one's self extended over time. Only the elderly can know in their own lives how an entire life cycle is an expression of the goodness of God.

⁴⁴ Erik H. Erickson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), 139-140.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

The conclusion I draw both from the available literature as well as from my own pastoral experience in preaching in the nursing home attests to this simple yet effective technique of reminiscent preaching (which will be considered further in the second section) as a helpful method of sermonizing within the context of worship in a nursing home setting. As has been discussed, reminiscing is a very natural part of the life cycle particularly within older adults. It brings with it many healthy and therapeutic benefits. It allows the resident, who has already had much of his dignity stripped away, to retain a strong sense of self-worth and personal value of his lifetime. Allowing residents to reminisce and to include reminiscing in the sermons often uncovers amazing aspects of a person's life which can serve as wonderful object lessons for others to hear as well during the course of the sermon.

Section II – Homiletical Implications, Reminiscent Preaching in the Institutional Setting

As how best to preach to a gathering of residents with a wide variety of cognitive and physical disabilities, Shirley Berman from The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod's Institute on Aging on the campus of Concordia University in Seward, Nebraska, simply recommends; "Aim for the middle."⁴⁶ Thomas St. James O'Conner adds that the use of traditional religious symbols is also helpful. These include wearing a clerical collar, using a Bible, singing familiar hymns, and incorporating familiar liturgy and traditional prayers.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Shirley Beaman, telephone conversation, 5 August 2004, The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, Institute on Aging, Seward, Nebraska.

⁴⁷ Thomas St. James O'Conner, "Ministry Without a Future: A Pastoral Care Approach to Patients with Senile Dementia" *The Journal of Pastoral Care* (Spring 1992) : 11-12.

Preaching to residents in various stages of dementia rather than becoming less important in reality becomes more important. The efficacy of the Word of God does not depend upon the state of mind of the person receiving the message. The efficacy of the Word rests solely upon the promise of God that it “does not return to Him void” (Isaiah 55:11). Every worship service should indeed include a brief expounding upon a passage of Scripture that is most effectively disseminated through a technique I call “reminiscent preaching.”

Graham Johnston, although he is dealing with preaching in general, attests to what he calls “Grace-full preaching” in a setting where community is an integral element.⁴⁸ Grace-full preaching carries with it the elements of concern and compassion for the hearers. The preacher in the nursing home resonates well with the residents when he shows himself to be human. The pastor also demonstrates his genuine concern for the residents when he comes faithfully and regularly to the nursing home with his message from God. To preach grace is to open the preacher up to his own weaknesses and doubts regarding his faith and relationship with Christ. As Johnston states, “too often today’s preaching can suggest an elitist mentality that the insiders of the church comprise the ‘good people’ and those on the outside are the ‘bad people.’⁴⁹ By reminiscing in the sermon, the pastor evokes powerful emotions in the lives of the resident hearers which they may readily express. Not only does it show interest in their lives and their past, it also shows genuine concern for their spiritual health as they look toward heaven in the future.

⁴⁸ Johnston, 127.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Consequently, preaching language needs to be inclusive, including preaching to the residents in the nursing home. For the aging residents who already have a heightened sense of their own mortality and are aware their death is near, to hear of God's grace as including even the preacher is a sincere means of proclaiming the Gospel to them. Taking advantage of such opportunities as preaching in the nursing home can serve to give the pastor/preacher more occasion to develop his communication and delivery skills that can also be applied in this grace-full manner. A gentle, caring tone of voice; a message of God's grace that comes from the Scriptures; a smattering of stories from the pastor's own life or from real life situations; and a dependable, consistent presence by the pastor in the nursing home all come together in a highly meaningful message that truly touches the hearts of God's senior saints. It is here that perhaps the most profound aspect of helpful preaching in the nursing home is discovered – the use of story and its further use in the residents' reminiscing about their lives.

Although he does not specifically address reminiscing as a form of storytelling, Bryan Chapell offers helpful homiletical information regarding the use of illustrations and stories in preaching. In his book, *Using Illustrations to Preach with Power*, Chapell admits that he struggled with the premise of using illustrations. Did laypeople no longer appreciate good preaching? Is it because television dominates the expectations and diminishes the capabilities of modern mind? Or, do illustrations “contain a hidden dynamic of living truth that captures attention and furthers understanding in a way that no other sermonic tool can match?”⁵⁰

Chapell offers what he calls “an Illustrative Hierarchy that looks like this:

⁵⁰ Chapell, 92.

Novella
Allegory
Parable
Illustration
Allusion
Example
Analogy
Figure of Speech⁵¹

Chapell asserts that the aspect of this hierarchy most ideally suited to relevant preaching is illustration. He then further defines a true illustration:

Illustrations are “life-situation” stories within sermons whose details (whether explicitly or imaginatively elicited) allow listeners to identify with an experience that elaborates, develops, and explains scriptural principles. Through the details of the story, the listener is able imaginatively to enter an experience in which a sermonic truth can be observed. The preacher tells the what, when, where, and why of an occurrence to give listeners personal access to the occasion. He encourages each listener to see, feel, taste, or smell features of an event as though he or she were bodily present in the unfolding account. Then, along with these sensory details, the preacher also suggests the emotions, thoughts, or reactions that would typify the experience of one living the account.⁵²

Dale Meyer suggests that such illustrations in sermons are “born from *homilai* (conversation)”

. . . planned and unplanned contacts, personal and social interactions with . . . people wherein you see and hear firsthand the effects of the Law. In hospitals and nursing facilities, in homes and in office sessions, at wedding receptions and funerals, at sports events, the health club, parties, everyone has a story to tell. They’ll tell where they’re hurting. They’ll let us know if they have Pharisaic pride. They’ll show us if they have Epicurean indifference. They love to tell their stories and the church has trained us to listen spiritually. Out of those conversations, out of *homiliai*, comes an appropriate, tailored preaching of the Law on Sunday mornings. ‘We believe, teach, and confess that the preaching of the Law is to be diligently applied not only to unbelievers and the impenitent but also to people who are genuinely believing, truly converted, regenerated and justified through faith.’⁵³

⁵¹ Ibid., 21.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Dale A. Meyer, *Liturgical Preaching, Contemporary Essays*, ed. Paul J. Grime and Dean W. Nadasdy (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), 16.

Chapell refers to this kind of storytelling as “life-situation preaching which strives to reach into the core of distress in personal, modern living and apply the healing of the gospel.”⁵⁴ Robert J. McCracken defines life-situation preaching this way:

“Seeking to avoid the remoteness and irrelevance, not to say unreality of much biblical exposition, it starts with people where they are, which was what Jesus did over and over again. The point of departure is a live issue of some kind. It may be personal or social; it may be theological or ethical. Whatever it is, the preacher makes it his business to get at the core of the problem, and, that done, he goes on to work out the solution, with biblical revelation, and the mind and Spirit of Christ, as the constraint points of reference and direction.”⁵⁵

Storytelling within the context of preaching among the residents within a nursing home carries with it an even higher degree of possibility as an especially effective means of conveying the Gospel message of salvation in Christ.

However, as has been previously mentioned, storytelling in nursing home preaching has yet another dimension that is unique; the element of reminiscing which is so important for the aging person. Although no literature was found that specifically tied the aspect of reminiscing with theological preaching, a comprehensive study was conducted in 1993 in which various therapeutic activities with person’s disabled with Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders (ADRD) were identified. One of these activities was the formation of “reminiscence groups.”⁵⁶

In her study, Carol Bowlby defines “reminiscence.”

What is reminiscence? This deceptively simple question is really a very complex one. The answer depends on the type of reminiscence and the

⁵⁴ Chapell, 29.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 30.

⁵⁶ Carol Bowlby, *Therapeutic Activities With Persons Disabled by Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders* (Gaithersburg, Maryland: Aspen Publishers, Inc., 1993), 208.

perspective taken by the respondent. Let me begin, then, by stating what I mean by reminiscence, in the context of working with individuals with ADRD. It is, quite simply, the recollection of previous life experiences. These previous life experiences are remembered for the pure pleasure of experiencing happy or satisfying occasions or to pass information on to others.

By contrast, what is called life-review reminiscence is focused primarily on analyzing, evaluating, and coming to terms with unpleasant or unhappy previous life experiences. Undoubtedly, simple reminiscence frequently has some evaluative characteristics but the crucial difference is one of emphasis. For example, life-review reminiscence focused on the depression years would focus on an unresolved issue, such as having to drop out of school because of finances. Guided life-review sessions are conducted by a trained therapist, who assists the person to work through his or her lifelong resentments about having dropped out of school, and, with successful life review, come to terms with this disappointment. Simple reminiscence about the depression would follow on recalling the experiences and circumstances of the time. The individual may have left school to help support the family, but the emphasis in the reminiscence session would be directed toward how people helped each other out and found ways to economize; the session would thereby provide support for the person by affirming the value of the sacrifice he or she made in leaving school.⁵⁷

Bowlby continues by stating that people of all ages reminisce about past experiences. However, for the elderly, reminiscence is particularly important. Reminiscence provides an opportunity, as they come to the end of their lives, to look back on their life experiences; to recall, recollect, to rethink all they have seen, done, accomplished, and left undone. It provides an opportunity to accomplish what Erikson described as the final task of summing up, of coming to terms with life accomplishments.⁵⁸ Butler was the first clinician to identify reminiscence as a positive, purposeful activity for the elderly. He wrote:

This paper postulates the universal occurrence in older people of the inner experience or mental process of reviewing one's life. I propose that this process helps account for the increased reminiscence in the aged, that it contributes to the occurrence of certain late-life disorders, particularly depression, and that it

⁵⁷ Ibid., 209.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

participates in the evolution of such characteristics as candor, serenity, and wisdom among certain of the aged.⁵⁹

Earlier thinking regarding reminiscing was viewed as negative – an unhealthy dwelling in the past. Despite the fact that it remains unclear whether life-review reminiscence is, in fact, a universal human process, the valuable contribution to healthy aging made by reminiscence is now widely acknowledged by clinicians and researchers.⁶⁰ The clinical literature seems to demonstrate that the personal identity of an older person is enhanced when the person is encouraged to discuss the past and to describe the experiences that created that person's unique self.⁶¹ For the frail elderly requiring institutional care either in an assisted living facility or in a skilled care facility, coming together with others in a group to share memories and offer mutual support and affirmation provides an opportunity that may not otherwise be available to them due to their reduced contact with family and friends.

Preaching in the setting of public worship within a nursing home that incorporates techniques involving reminiscing affords a very powerful, helpful, and effective means of conveying the Gospel to the aging in a way that is truly unique. By making use of and allowing the residents to reminisce, the pastor is given a means to touch the lives of the aging in a most personal manner.

Reminiscent preaching gives the residents in the nursing home an occasion to remember the people, events, and locations that helped to shape their lives. An example may be the pastor mentioning in a sermon that by way of the special people in the life of

⁵⁹ Ibid., 210.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

the Christian, the faith was taught and inculcated into the mind and heart. These people may have included a father or mother, a special Sunday School teacher, or a much loved pastor. Immediately, images come forth in the mind of people and events that may have taken place many years ago. Yet the images are brought into the present. Amazingly, not only is the person remembered but also what the person said or did that is so meaningful is also remembered. The lesson that was taught so many years ago is re-taught yet again. The faith and the memory of the special person are reinforced.

Likewise, the pastor may mention an event that happened in his own life that will trigger a similar memory in the mind of the resident. With the shared memory comes a stronger interest in what the pastor has to say. The shared memory also allows the aged hearers to follow the story and add their own endings and conclusions.

The pastor can also take advantage of the occasion in his preaching to remind the residents that he is mindful and respectful of the fact that they have life stories filled with many meaningful and even amazing events. Demonstrating such respect for their life stories is often reciprocated by the residents with a renewed interest in the preacher's message. Even a resident who may have lost hope for any remaining quality of life can be invigorated when such regard and attention is shown for the importance of his stories and experiences from the past

Methods of incorporating reminiscing into helpful preaching within the nursing home may include:

- Visiting with residents and listening to their stories as they reminisce. Then asking for permission to use their story in one of the weekly homilies. Quite often

the resident is honored and willingly gives the pastor permission to re-tell the story.

- Allow the resident to re-tell the story himself during the worship service.
- When telling a story in a homily, ask the residents, if the facts and dates of the story are correct. Allow the residents to correct the pastor if errors in the story are outstanding.
- Make use of some kind of object lesson in telling the story. These may include photographs from the past, quilted items or other handmade objects, antiques, tools that are no longer normally used.
- Demonstrate to the residents that the pastor is genuinely interested in hearing and learning the truth from the past.
- As the majority of residents who currently live in nursing homes are from the Great Depression and World War II era, the pastor needs a basic grasp of the historical facts and truths of these two major national and historic events.

Incorporating this material into the sermon creates immediate interest and the pastor gains the genuine respect and quick attention of the residents.

When utilizing reminiscent preaching with the institutionalized elderly, several benefits emerge.⁶²

1. Mood can be improved and positive moods maintained through recalling and reminiscing about pleasant previous experiences. Improved mood helps in combating depression that frequently comes with old age.

⁶² Ibid., 215.

2. Self-esteem and life satisfaction can be supported and improved with reminiscent preaching.
3. Preaching that includes reminiscing about positive life experiences and previous positive spiritual experiences is a pleasant activity for the elderly resident and enhances spiritual and faith formation.
4. Reminiscence experiences are vivid and rich with sensory detail and have the effect of making the previous experience seem immediate once again.
5. Reminiscing within a dependable, structured situation (such as in the case of a weekly worship service) reduces stress and depression.
6. Residents also enjoy the pastor/preacher reminiscing about his own life and life experiences.⁶³

Reminiscent preaching also works well in conveying the message of the sermon from the Scriptures. This element is important to the residents during the sermon. Although they will by their nature reminisce, they also want to “hear a good word from God.” Reminiscing is not done in lieu of the Scriptures. Rather it serves the purpose of the Scriptures and conveys the faith of the church in an effective way that easily relates to God’s senior saints. As Jesus taught His disciples and the crowds who followed Him using parables, the elements of the parables can be transferred into the lives of the residents. The parable of the forgiving king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants (Matthew 18:22-35) can bring a vivid memory of the unforgiving times during the Great Depression when the banker delivered the papers of foreclosure on the farm. The lesson of forgiveness as a characteristic of God’s love toward His people can bring

⁶³ Ibid..

much comfort to the heart and soul of an aged resident who may have experienced this traumatic event.

Reminiscent preaching, particularly as it relates to nursing home residents with Alzheimer's Disease, likewise has distinctive advantages. Experts have described Alzheimer's as "child development in reverse." Granted, this may seem to be a tempting analogy. The skills children progressively acquire as they move from infancy to puberty – speaking, walking, dressing, toileting – are the same skills people with Alzheimer's progressively lose. However, even though they appear increasingly childlike, people with Alzheimer's are still adults. Even with severe Alzheimer's, many people retain some of their adult personalities and continue to respond to some of the interests they enjoyed before the disease developed. Experts in caregiving warn against treating Alzheimer's sufferers as children and feel this approach can invite a patronizing attitude that upsets affected individuals and actually makes caregiving considerably more difficult.⁶⁴

Alzheimer's sufferers do not devolve from adulthood into infancy. To presume they do is an incorrect perception. Even when severely demented, they continue to be adults and retain vestiges of their pre-Alzheimer's adult worldliness, knowledge, and personality. Pastoral care is helpful when it includes address the person as an adult, avoid childishness, and modifying adult activities to suit the persons' remaining abilities. Particularly when addressing the question of reminiscent preaching among people with Alzheimer's Disease and related disorders (ADRD), to assume that such a person will gain nothing from the sermon using this technique is to deny the results of current research into the disease. It is true that recent memories tend to fade first with an

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Alzheimer's patient. However, older, deeper memories generally last longer and some memories remain despite severe dementia.

Particularly for a person who may have a lifelong history of faithful church attendance, to deny that person a simple presentation of the Gospel in a carefully prepared homily which uses reminiscing as a homiletical method is the height of condescension. It also short-circuits the power of the Holy Spirit to work in creating and sustaining saving faith in the heart and life of a person, even one with Alzheimer's disease. In the very comprehensive book, *There's Still a Person in There*, Dr. Barry Reisberg and his colleagues at the New York University Medical Center's Aging and Dementia Research Center strongly suggests that it is not until the very late stages of the disease that total cognitive failure occurs.⁶⁵

Residents who have Alzheimer's disease and related disorders (ADRD) also have the need to sum up, to look back over their lives. Those whose disease has progressed to the stage when they are in need of full-time institutional care may require the direct assistance of others not only to meet their physical needs but also their emotional needs. Although long-term memory is often less affected than short-term memory, those individuals still require assistance from others to elicit their memories. The pastor in the context of his preaching in the nursing home can be a very effective person to assist in this process.

Both as it relates to nursing home residents with Alzheimer's disease as well as residents with other aging processes, reminiscent preaching can have a very therapeutic effect as well as serve the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel. Reminiscing is the mental

⁶⁵ Michael Castleman, Dolores Gallagher-Thompson, Ph.D. and Matthew Naythons, M.D., *There's Still a Person in There, The Complete Guide to Treating and Coping with Alzheimer's* (New York: Perigee Book, 1999), 38-40.

process of recalling the pictures and “images” in the mind that make up a person’s life history.

Reminiscing likewise involves the senses of smell, taste, and sensations that can come immediately to mind when a story is re-told from the past. Reminiscing may also evoke strong emotional responses as both good and painful feelings may return when images from the past return to the forefront of the mind. Reminiscing in preaching is a powerful tool that can be used to great benefit both for the preacher as well as the hearer. In preaching the truths of the Christian faith in the nursing home, reminiscing serves the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a very helpful way.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDIES OF THE RESIDENTS

The research for this MAP included two components. The first was to prepare and deliver six sermons to the gathered residents of the Greenfield Manor during the weekly worship service. The sermons were to be written in such a way as to employ reminiscing as a more helpful and effective homiletical technique. The sermons were written and delivered between May and October 2005. The manuscripts for these sermons are included in appendix A.

The second component was to conduct personal interviews with ten of the residents themselves. These interviews were to include examples of the residents reminiscing and testifying to actual events and stories in their own lives. Transcripts of these interviews are included with this chapter and as appendix B⁶⁶. These interviews (with the exception of one) were conducted between June and August 2005. The questions asked the residents were primarily intended to assist in spurring their memories and facilitating the reminiscing process. The basic premise of the questioning was not necessarily to follow a pre-determined script of questions so as to limit the interview conversation. Rather the questions were more free flowing so as to allow the resident to

⁶⁶ This chapter introduces an element of the qualitative research that was completed for this MAP. The chapter consists of ten “case studies” developed from interviews conducted with eleven residents of the Greenfield Manor. Transcripts of these interviews are included in appendix B. John W. Creswell, *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, Second Edition* (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Productions, Inc., 2003), 179-207.

speaking freely about the stories being told. However, the questions followed this basic outline.

1. What was a particularly significant moment in your life?
2. How was your life as a child?
3. What was unique about your life with your own family?
4. Was the church important in your life history?
5. What are your comments regarding our worship services and particularly my sermons here at the Greenfield Manor?

The residents first offered their own life accounts in the interviews. They then offered critical analysis and evaluation of the sermons themselves so as to help ascertain the usefulness of the reminiscent homiletical technique. The interviews were tape recorded.

However, the research methodology did not provide the information needed for this MAP. While the residents who participated in the interviews were able to reminisce easily from their own life history, they were not able to offer useful analysis or criticism of the sermons themselves. Frequently, their comments were: "I really enjoy them." "I've learned things from the Bible I never knew." "You speak to us when you preach. You're not looking down at your notes." The reminiscing technique of preaching could not adequately be tested with the interviews.

So, an additional component was necessarily added to evaluate the homiletical method. Three institutional chaplains were enlisted to review and critique two of the six sermons that had been especially prepared for this MAP. Their analysis and evaluations comprise the next chapter.

The evaluations given by the three institutional chaplains provided needed information about the value of this preaching method.

Case Study Summations

Case Study One – “My Congregation Died”

Geraldine came to the Greenfield Manor in May 2003. The widow of two husbands, Geraldine lost her first child in a miscarriage. She had two daughters with her second husband to whom she was married for over 60 years. Geraldine came to the Greenfield Manor after living a prior year in a senior citizen’s apartment complex in another part of the Greenfield community. Having lived in the apartment for a year, it was becoming difficult for Geraldine to walk and negotiate stairs. Geraldine now uses a motorized “Pronto.”

Geraldine worked for the United Telephone Company of Iowa for 38 years, beginning her career in 1937 as a night operator and retiring in 1975. During her career, she saw huge advancements in communication technology. As a result, Geraldine is quite open to new technological “gadgets. At the age of 90, she is able to manipulate, program and use her digital television and VCR player.

Her small congregation of “The Congregational Church of Fontanelle” was Geraldine’s home church since April 1, 1945. She served for over fifty years with the congregation’s altar guild, seeing to it that communion was properly prepared, paraments were properly displayed, and all things were in order for Sunday morning worship. The congregation was the oldest in Adair County. At its peak, the congregation had an average of fifty people worshipping in the 1950’s and 1960’s. It had a full-time pastor who lived in a parsonage owned by the congregation.

The congregation steadily declined in membership due to the death of its members since the 1970's. The remaining members voted to dissolve the congregation and sell the residual assets in a local auction in 2004. As Geraldine states, "My congregation died."

Geraldine depends totally on me for her pastoral care. She has not had communion in many years. This has been a topic of discussion with the elders of my congregation. There is no other pastor who will visit with her. She thoroughly enjoys and very much anticipates the weekly worship services that I hold at the Greenfield Manor. This truly is her only opportunity for worship.

Geraldine comments on two important aspects of my preaching that are germane to my service at the Greenfield Manor. One is to be certain to project my voice so that all of the residents who may have hearing loss can hear well. The other recommendation she offers is to be sure I am able to lead singing *a cappella* if necessary. Geraldine gave me permission to tell the story in one of my sermons of how the remaining members of her congregation decided to donate the altar paraments for use on the new altar that is now on display in the activities room at the Greenfield Manor. On the occasion of dedicating the altar with the new appointments and the paraments, several of the remaining members of the congregation attended the particular Wednesday morning service. I gave them the opportunity to reminisce about their memories of the little congregation. Geraldine stated how wonderful it was to her that the paraments would continue to be used and would serve as a special memory of her years of service in the congregation.

Geraldine is a wonderful and gentle lady who very much desires to maintain her worship life and relationship with her Lord. She is an example of how important ministry

is at the Greenfield Manor. For Geraldine, there simply is no other alternative or option for her to come into contact with the sung and spoken word of God. Geraldine always has a peaceful smile on her face and generously expresses her appreciation for this ministry.

Case Study Two – “If You Promise to Marry Her”

Howard and Mildred had been married for twenty-nine years. They had two children, a son and daughter. Howard was an alcoholic. For years, Howard’s excessive drinking had caused him to verbally and emotionally abuse Mildred. Life in their home was hard and unpredictable. The “merry-go-round” effect of alcoholism was very much a part of their lives. Howard would have a “drinking spell” and something bad would happen. He would either lash out at Mildred or one of his children. Occasionally, he would sulk while he was in this alcoholic state. When Howard returned to his more sober moments, he would promise that he would amend his ways. A sense of hope and expectation would come over the household and things would be better for a while. Then it would happen again.

As often occurs, Mildred’s “proper” lifestyle was intimidating to Howard and made him feel guilty. He became involved with another woman. She, too, was an alcoholic. After being married for twenty-nine years, Howard asked Mildred for a divorce. “If you promise to marry her, I’ll give you a divorce,” Mildred responded. Howard and his new wife drank together for another ten years before Howard died.

Since Mildred was on her own with two children, she worked for over twenty years at the Adair County Memorial Hospital in the dietary department. She prepared meals for the patients while they were in the hospital. Her son and daughter were

permanently damaged by the effects of their father's alcoholism and had turbulent relationships with him following his marriage to his second wife. The son died in 2000 of cancer and the daughter continues to be a faithful caregiver to her mother in the assisted living residence.

Mildred was baptized in the Methodist church in Kansas and attended the Methodist church throughout her childhood after her family moved to Iowa. She became Roman Catholic when she married Howard. She has remained faithful to the Roman Catholic congregation in Greenfield for most of her adult years. The Catholic priest who serves Greenfield comes to the Greenfield Manor once a month to offer mass to the Catholic residents and distribute communion. Women from the congregation come once a week to bring the host to the Catholic residents and to recite the rosary. The Catholic residents also receive an annual paperback missal which is intended for private devotions.

Mildred has been a resident at the Greenfield Manor since April 2002. She was one of the first residents I met when I arrived in Greenfield in July of that same year. She is a very faithful attendee to all the worship devotions both during the Wednesday morning service for the entire resident community as well as for the Thursday afternoon devotions held specifically in the assisted living residence. At age 92 Mildred, is still quite alert cognitively. She easily remembers names and dates from many years past.

Mildred states that she especially appreciates the sermons as she enjoys hearing the stories of my family, the dog, and how the Lord continues to bless our lives.

Mildred's one recommendation regarding my preaching is to make sure that the rate of speech is slower. Too often, she says, preachers can talk too fast and make the sermon difficult for the residents to follow in their comprehension.

Mildred has many difficult memories from her years married to Howard. She has developed many coping skills to alleviate the pain she has from her past. As a result, it is difficult for her to reminisce upon anything from her past that is pleasant to her. However, she has said on several occasions that she very much enjoys listening to the stories of the past lives of the other residents.⁶⁷

Case Study Three – “We Were Afraid of the Klan”

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Ku Klux Klan was very active in Greenfield. The Klan had a meeting building in Greenfield, and the Klan leader for the entire state of Iowa lived in Greenfield. The Klan regularly voiced its vitriol against African Americans, Jews, and Roman Catholics. Greenfield is located in Adair County in Iowa. Joining Adair County is Madison County. The Madison County seat is the small city of Winterset. The Underground Railroad stopped in Winterset to retrieve and transport slaves who had escaped primarily from Missouri and other states in the south during the American Civil War. Although never part of the confederacy, southern Iowa had many confederate sympathizers who would freely report runaway slaves and who, in turn, would then face capture and brutal torture from their slave masters once they were returned to the confederate south.

It is from this historical setting that Maurece has many strong memories. Although painful memories, she freely shares these stories. Maurece has been a resident of the Greenfield Manor since April 2003. A devout Roman Catholic her entire life, she remembers hearing and reading the propaganda put forth by the Klan in Greenfield. It created within her a sense of fear and mistrust which she admitted has remained her

⁶⁷ Mildred never had the opportunity to address the effects her husband’s alcoholism had upon her life. Neither is she interested in considering possibly participating in an Al-Anon group in the local area.

entire life. Although the strength of the Klan has since disappeared in Greenfield, Maurece is still highly sensitive to criticism regarding the Catholic Church.

Regardless, Maurece nonetheless exudes a very exuberant faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. She states that she very much looks forward to my weekly devotions at the Greenfield Manor and enjoys the sermons. She readily admits that she takes advantage of every opportunity for spiritual nurturing that is provided at the nursing home facility. In addition to my devotions, she also attends the monthly devotions offered by the local Catholic priest. She is also participates with the Catholic women who come to administer the Eucharist to the Catholic residents at the Manor once a week.

Maurece does not offer any criticisms or suggestions for my sermons at the Manor. She has stated, however, that she was impressed with the presence of my Bible in my hands when I am speaking and making use of various Bible passages during the course of the sermon. She is a very faithful attendee to all of my devotions.

Maurece does not manifest any visible aspects of the fear that was ingrained in her as she was a young Catholic girl growing up with the Klan. However, she also suggests that she is very glad “it all blew over,” as she states, and that individual church congregations “get along” much better now. Particularly with my preaching, Maurice also enjoys hearing stories from my life and my past.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Maurece is no longer able to walk and moves about the Greenfield Manor in a motorized wheelchair. Once considered a “luxury” for only the wealthiest residents and their families, motorized wheelchairs and carts are becoming much more common and are readily available. Her motorized wheelchair has also been a topic of conversation with Maurice as she reminisces on the years she was still able to walk. She “admonishes” me to walk as much as I can while I am still able.

· Case Study Four – “I Worry About the Money”

Gertrude never had much money. She was truly a spend thrift, saving money every opportunity she had. She readily admits she did not think she would ever come to a place like the Greenfield Manor. Gertrude lives in the new assisted living wing, having arrived in June 2003. Assisted living at the Greenfield Manor is entirely private pay. Gertrude is fearful that her money is being spent a rapid rate for her to live in the assisted living residence. Her son, who is her primary care giver, assures Gertrude that she need not worry about the money. However, she continues to do so, and her worrying has become a source of much distress for Gertrude.

Gertrude grew up in a family in which her father was an alcoholic. She worked on the family farm but even then she was fearful of how much money was being lost due to her father’s drinking. Gertrude was also fearful of the lost productivity on the farm from his not being able to work many days because of his drinking binges. Gertrude admits that when the family went into town to purchase food and other dry goods, her *father would always go to the tavern. He inflicted much physical and emotional abuse upon Gertrude’s mother as well as herself and her siblings.*

Gertrude’s parents did not attend church. Rather, she would walk from the family farm to the main road where she was picked up by her grandparents who took her to the local Methodist Church. After Gertrude married her husband, “Orlie,” in 1934, she and her husband continued to attend worship at the same Methodist Church. She has many fond memories of one Methodist pastor in particular who she describes as being a very gentle man genuinely caring for his flock and proclaiming the truth of salvation in Christ.

In 1943, Orlie was in a farm equipment accident and lost his leg. He lived the rest of his life with a wooden leg. Gertrude states Orlie “still got more work done than my father ever did.” Orlie also had the dubious responsibility of getting Gertrude’s father out of the tavern when he had too much to drink and was unable to drive home with the family.

At 92 years of age, Gertrude still has a sharp mind. She says that she always loved going to church, and the services at the Greenfield Manor are very important to her. They are the only way she is able to worship her Lord. Gertrude says that she very much prefers a sermon in which the preacher actually speaks to the people rather than something being read. She remembers a Methodist pastor who read his sermons and this has remained in her mind. She encourages me to remember to “speak up.” Gertrude states that she has considered being fitted for a hearing aid but she “just can’t justify spending the money.” “How can I spend \$1,000 for a hearing aid that will end up in the ground in just a few years?”⁶⁹

Case Study Five – “It Was Not Considered Proper For a Teacher to be Married”

At age 95, Velma is oldest of the residents of the Greenfield Manor who participated in this study. Despite her age, her cognitive capabilities are still quite good. She was born in 1910, one of eight children who grew up on a farm in southwest Iowa. She completed eight grades of school and was able to attend high school. Velma describes how she distinguished herself by being an exceptional student and passing all

⁶⁹ Since my interview with Gertrude, she has been relocated from the assisted living residence to the skilled nursing unit at the Greenfield Manor. She has declined considerably and has difficulty communicating. However, she still actively attends my worship services and enjoys the sermons. Gertrude gave me permission to tell the story of her husband losing his leg and still “outworking” most of the other farmers with a wooden leg.

of the required tests in the various subjects when many of the other students “flunked.” She is particularly proud of the fact that she passed her Algebra test.

Velma had the rare opportunity to attend classes at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, just south of Des Moines. She lacked one semester from completing her studies and receiving her teaching degree when she became “deathly ill” with anemia. Velma vividly remembers the doctor coming to the house every day to attend to her. Her father was willing to spend the large sum of money to purchase the medications Velma required and slowly she recovered.

Although she never completed college and received her degree, Velma had sufficient credit to nonetheless be qualified to teach in a local country school. To her surprise, she was told that as long as she taught she was not allowed to marry. For several years, Velma thought she would never be able to marry and have her own family. This caused her much anguish.

Her future husband, Alfred, told Velma that he would honor her decision whatever it would be. Velma taught for five more years to save her money in order for she and Alfred to have a good start in their marriage. Alfred waited for Velma during those years, and, during her final year of teaching, Alfred proposed to her and gave her an engagement ring. Velma remembers all of her students crowding around her desk to see her engagement ring. Following that school year, Velma resigned, never to teach again. She still speaks about how “unfair” this was as she would have loved to continue teaching. She is happy that today teachers may be married and have their own families. Alfred and Velma raised five children.

Velma grew up in the Methodist church, and she and Alfred along with their children faithfully attended worship in the local congregation. She reminisces about a woman pastor who served the congregation for seven years. The woman at one point had been involved in an automobile accident and had injured her leg. She told the congregation that she could “still preach” and simply sat in a chair facing the congregation until she was able to walk again. The pastor confirmed all five of Alfred and Velma’s children. Alfred died in January 2003.

Velma states that she enjoys my homilies particularly because they are grounded in the Scriptures. “This is the most important thing,” she states. She also says it is important that I have a “good voice” so that all of the residents can hear even if they have hearing loss. Velma can also tell that I have had more theological education than many of the other ministers who come occasionally to lead the residents in worship. She appreciates the references I make to Luther and other church fathers from time to time. Velma says “she would give me an A” on my preaching. She very much looks forward to my devotions and enjoys my sermons. Velma gave me permission to tell her teaching story in one of my sermons. Her story served as a striking contrast to the current day in which a pregnant teacher in the Greenfield local high school was teaching a class when she went into labor in front of the students. I used her story in relation to Jesus as a master teacher. Likewise, I stated in the sermon that along with sharing a truth from the Scriptures as well as a story, the sermon should also be a time and a setting for learning regardless of how old we may be.

Case Study Six – “I Was Born a Missouri Synod Lutheran
And I’ll Die a Missouri Synod Lutheran”

Maxine is one of two residents of the Greenfield Manor who participated in this who is also a member of the congregation at which I am a pastor. Maxine is the “quintessential” Lutheran having been a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Greenfield since her birth in 1918.

Maxine played the church organ for over forty years, including a stretch of six years of not missing a single Sunday. She learned to play the piano and organ from her older sister. This sister was the only child for whom the parents were willing to pay for piano lessons, and she then taught her seven siblings how to play as well.

Maxine is a member of the “Weber” family which has a dominant history in early Lutheranism in Adair County in southwest Iowa. Her parents, Bill and Amelia Weber, raised their children on a farm. Bill also worked in a meat packing plant to earn additional money for the family.

Music was a major emphasis within the Weber clan. Many of the children were taught the basic elements of church music. As a result, the Lutheran congregations within Adair County have never had to do without beautiful liturgical music. The family members are also ardent supporters of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

Along with her husband, Gerald, Maxine raised two sons. Her oldest son, Gale, died in 2002 from alcoholism and depression. Maxine also worked at the Wiggs Variety Store for eleven years in order to help support the family. In 2003, Maxine moved into the assisted living facility at the Greenfield Manor and is a very active member of the nursing home community. She is still able to attend the Divine Service on Sunday mornings at Immanuel Lutheran Church as well as the Wednesday morning devotion at

the Greenfield Manor. She is still active in the Lutheran Women's Missionary League and continues to generously support the ministry of the congregation.

When the family home burned in 1965, Maxine's baptismal and confirmation certificate were destroyed in the fire. This is still a source of loss for Maxine and brings tears to her eyes. The family purchased a mobile home which was intended only to be temporary housing. However, the family lived in the home for twenty five years until Maxine moved into the town of Greenfield in 1990.

Maxine states she very much enjoys my sermons and that "she has learned things she has never known before." She also encourages me to continue to speak with a clear voice as this is a very important characteristic for preaching in the nursing home. She is happy it is the "Missouri Synod Lutheran" pastor who is leading the devotions and doing the preaching. This way, the residents are "getting the truth from the Bible and not some nonsense from another preacher who doesn't know what he's talking about." Maxine has shared several stories with me that I have used in my sermons. She freely reminisces of her past and loves to share stories of how glad she is to be Lutheran. From the sermon, Maxine has commented how her faith continues to be sustained. She genuinely sparkles during the worship services and is free and generous with her compliments.

Case Study Seven – "We Bought the Sale Barn"

"We were tired of always having to struggle to make ends meet." So says Zelpha who has been a resident at the Greenfield Manor since 2003. Zelpha was born in 1914, making her 91 years old. She admits she is not able to retain dates and names as she once did. And she faces having to be moved from the assisted living residence into the full care nursing unit of the facility. Zelpha is the youngest of six children who grew up on a

farm south of Greenfield. She has never been any further out of the state of Iowa than two trips to Arizona during her lifetime.

She, along with her husband Loy, attended the necessary training to become licensed auctioneers. “Rather than always having to spend money at farm auctions, we decided we should make money at farm auctions.” Loy became sought out to facilitate farm and home auctions to the point that he and Zelpha were able to buy the sale barn in Stuart, Iowa, located about twenty miles from Greenfield. Zelpha states, “We were able to pay our bills better after that.”

Loy and Zelpha had two sons. Her youngest son, Dean, died in 2000 from unknown medical causes. Her other son, Gary, continues to farm in Adair County outside of Greenfield.

Zelpha has been a lifelong Methodist but she admits her pastor does not come to see her often and she misses partaking of “communion” on a regular basis. “We use grape juice instead of real wine,” as she points out to me. She also states that she very much enjoys both my Wednesday morning and Thursday afternoon devotions. She states (as well as with most of the other residents who participated in this study) that “speaking up” is the most important thing to remember when preaching to residents in a nursing home. In Zelpha’s particular case, as a result of suffering two strokes, she adds, “it is very important to also speak with a slow rate of speech.” Zelpha stated in a conversation prior to this interview that she believed the reason why the residents are so eager to attend the Wednesday morning devotion and listen to the sermon is due to the rapport that exists between me and the residents. She alluded to the premise that the residents are simply

“delighted” that a pastor comes on a regular, weekly basis to lead them in a service and to proclaim a sermon.

Case Study Eight – “Preaching is Men’s Work”

“I grew up in the Congregational Church. But I always wanted to be Lutheran.”

Carolyn (age 91) tells the story of going with a friend to catechism instruction in the Lutheran parsonage as a youngster in Calhoun County, Iowa. She was very impressed with how the Lutheran pastor made use of the Scriptures as well as the Small Catechism to teach so much about the Christian faith. Carolyn states that although her parents did not forbid her from attending the catechism classes with her friend, they did not see the point of needing to know “so much Bible.”

Carolyn made it a point when she was old enough she would marry a Missouri Synod Lutheran. This she did when she married her husband, Arthur, who was a devout Lutheran. Arthur’s father was also a very fervent Lutheran. Carolyn received catechetical instruction and was confirmed in the Lutheran church.

Throughout her life, Carolyn has had an insatiable appetite to learn as much about the Scriptures and the Lutheran faith as she could. Although she and her husband lived in Manson, Iowa, and attended the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Carolyn admits, “It was not the same as the Missouri Church. They did not take the Bible as seriously in the Evangelical Church.”

The church has been a prominent feature in Carolyn’s entire life. She has been a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Greenfield for many years. She seeks every opportunity to attend Bible study, worship services, and other occasions to study the Bible. She is very fervent in the Lutheran faith and in her loyalty to The Lutheran

Church – Missouri Synod. She speaks with pride that all of her children have remained Lutheran along with their families.

Carolyn has profound hearing loss and states it is very important for me to speak clearly and with good volume. Carolyn says she does not like the women pastors who come to do a devotion at the Greenfield Manor because “they are too lady like and have soft voices.” “Preaching,” Carolyn emphatically states, “is men’s work.”⁷⁰

Case Study Nine – “Bow Your Back and Grit Your Teeth”

My mother, Mozelle, lived the final two years of her life in the Greenfield Manor. Having died from advanced Alzheimer’s disease in June 2005, she was 81 years old. She was also the youngest of all of the residents who participated in this project. Her husband and my father, Frank, was an alcoholic and a heavy smoker. He died in 1993 at the age of 71. Mozelle suffered from depression which was exacerbated by the fact that Frank had numerous adulterous affairs in the final years of his life. Ultimately, they divorced and later remarried.

Mozelle was one of five siblings who were brought up in north Texas in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of the Stone/Campbell tradition. Her siblings later converted to the Campbellite Church of Christ. Mozelle and Frank became members of St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Houston in 1971 and remained members for the duration of their lives. The both held several congregational offices throughout the years.

Despite enduring much suffering in her adult life, Mozelle was a devoted member of the congregation. She served faithfully on the altar guild and participated in the

⁷⁰ Particularly with Carolyn, she has been the only resident to “critique” my sermons. One occasion, Carolyn suggested that I misspoke when I told a story about playing tapes to residents in the nursing home for a project in Boy Scouts. She told me “not to end my sentences with prepositions.”

Braille workers group. She was very supportive of my preparing for the ministry and attending the seminary. Her favorite words of wisdom for me were to “bow your back and grit your teeth” and that any job should be done correctly “even if it kills you.”

Despite her disability with Alzheimer’s disease, Mozelle continued to faithfully attend my Wednesday morning devotions and receive the Sacrament for as long as she was able. Although she was not able to speak coherently, she always had a sparkle in her eyes and knew that I was speaking to her about her Lord Jesus Christ. As long as she was still coherent and possessed sufficient cognitive capabilities, she encouraged me to continue to preach the truth of salvation being from “grace alone.” She stated this was the most precious truth of the Bible that is so clearly taught in the Lutheran Church. Mozelle also indicated to me that she was most pleased and happy to give me permission to tell any story about her life that I would like in my sermons. Although she thought her life was not one that was noteworthy, she was impressed that I thought otherwise. I have used her stories generously throughout my preaching ministry and I intend to continue doing so.

Case Study Ten – “I Was in Love”

Lloyd and Nellie are one of only three married couples at the assisted living residence of the Greenfield Manor. They both were raised in Adair County but they did not know each other as children. Lloyd was born in 1911 and Nellie in 1913. They married in 1930 after having attended a blind date to a “house dance.” Nellie’s father was a very religious and strict man. No dancing was allowed and a deck of cards could not be found in the house. Nellie grew up Lutheran but became Methodist when she married Lloyd. Nellie was married at age seventeen and Lloyd was twenty years old.

Both families were opposed to the marriage, stating that Lloyd and Nellie were too young.

Lloyd and Nellie's lives were difficult. They were always poor, working as farmers. Nellie states that it seems they were never able to get ahead in life. However, they never complained about their lives. Nellie admits she left her Lutheran upbringing and became a Methodist for Lloyd because "I was in love." She and Lloyd went to their house dance on a Saturday night, and Lloyd told Nellie he wanted to see her again the following day on Sunday. "Oh no! You can't do that. It's too soon. My father will not approve of it." But Lloyd came to see Nellie anyway. When they were married, Lloyd and Nellie had \$75 between them.

Lloyd and Nellie have one daughter who now lives in Indianola, Iowa. Growing up, they were only able to go to church once per month. When they were able to attend church, they gave twenty five cents as their offering.

Lloyd became very depressed when he and Nellie moved into the assisted living of the Greenfield Manor. Nellie had become disabled to the point that she could no longer stay in their private home and care for herself. They had lived in a nice home which they had designed and had custom built. Moving out of the house was very difficult for Lloyd. The couple has since moved into a larger apartment in the assisted living residence and Lloyd is doing much better now. For Lloyd everything had to be done correctly. He is a perfectionist.

Both Lloyd and Nellie very much enjoy the weekly devotions and look forward to them. The weekly "mini-church" service marks the first time they have been able to attend a worship service on a regular weekly basis. Nellie states the sermons are "very

understandable and are excellent.” Lloyd comments that I speak clearly and the sermons are always based upon a text from the Bible.

Lloyd and Nellie are both critical of the Methodist pastor who they say does not come to visit them. They are very thankful and appreciative of a pastor who attends to the spiritual needs of the elderly, and they consider themselves particularly blessed to be residents of the Greenfield Manor where they have such an opportunity to worship regularly with an excellent, Biblically-based sermon. Lloyd and Nellie will celebrate their 75th anniversary in February 2006. This has been a source of many stories I have used in my sermons as an amazing example of marital faithfulness. A celebration is being planned for their anniversary. I have been asked to write a special sermon for the occasion. Such an opportunity will be a wonderful time to proclaim the gospel of Christ to many people who will come for the festivities.⁷¹

The interviews with the residents demonstrated clearly the need they have to tell the stories that make their lives unique. On no occasion did the residents need any “prodding” to begin or continue the conversation. Once the reminiscing began, it flowed easily and naturally. Two characteristics in their reminiscing seemed to be true for all of the residents. The first was the tendency to tell of the hardships and struggles in their lives. I did not sense that this was to seek sympathy. But it was perhaps for the residents to hear themselves speak and recognize that their lives have value and meaning in telling the stories of hardship that were uniquely theirs.

⁷¹ Following the “formal” interview for the writing of their case study, Lloyd and Nellie asked me to come to their assisted living apartment for further conversation. During this conversation, they shared with me many stories from their past. They freely reminisced and enjoyed the opportunity to tell their stories. I encouraged them to work on a history “picture book” of their lives together as a keepsake for them and to share with their guests on the occasion of their 75th anniversary celebration.

Second, the residents were quite willing to share their stories. They were very appreciative of the opportunity to do so. They also told their stories with significant detail. This is another characteristic of reminiscing that can be employed to great benefit in preaching. As the residents told their story, it was apparent that the flood of details from the past came rushing to the present in their minds. Loved ones or even adversaries who may already have been dead for several years come alive again. The setting in which a particular story took place was once again vivid in their minds. Reminiscing carries with it the valuable characteristic of the storyteller being taken back in time and re-living the episode over again. It is also an opportunity for the storyteller to take the hearer into the story with them. In this way reminiscing can be a powerful and very helpful tool in preaching in the nursing home.

The residents' reactions to the sermons and the use of their stories in the sermons delivered were simple and genuine. The residents freely expressed their appreciation for the sermons as well as the opportunities for regular worship on a weekly schedule. Here again the aspect of trust comes into play. The residents in an assisted living facility and nursing home are a "captive audience." They are at the mercy of the local pastors to provide spiritual care in whatever form it may take. In this setting, the pastor can essentially do and say as he pleases and faces little accountability for it. Hence genuine concern and truthfulness is essential in preaching to the aged.

These interviews were conducted with residents I know and have a pastoral relationship. For this reason, I believe the interviews accomplished the first goal of demonstrating the ease in which the residents will reminisce with someone they trust. I did not have the sense that the residents tried to embellish their stories in any way. They

spoke candidly, honestly, and sincerely. The residents obviously enjoyed telling their stories and they spoke honestly of how their faith and their relationship with the Lord played a leading role in their lives and in their stories. The interviews served to build upon this pastoral relationship and develop a stronger bond of trust. The Holy Spirit working through the word of God finds very fertile ground to sustain saving faith in this important setting.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHAPLAINS' REVIEWS

The original research for this MAP called for the interviewing of ten residents of the Greenfield Manor along with the delivery of six specially prepared sermons. These interviews were intended to accomplish two goals. The first was to facilitate and demonstrate the propensity of the residents to freely reminisce about their lives and important life experiences. The second was to encourage the interviewed residents to offer constructive criticism and analysis of the sermons delivered for the purpose of this MAP.

The residents were quite able to fulfill the first goal. However, they were not able to accomplish the second. In this sense, the proposed research model was flawed. The residents seemed to be apprehensive to say anything “negative” regarding the sermons. Even with personal assurances that they need not have such fear, the residents’ comments regarding the sermons were elementary. Critical analysis of the sermons delivered to the residents had to be attained by another method.

To accomplish the second goal, three institutional chaplains were enlisted to review a videotape of two of the sermons as they were delivered to the residents. David, the first chaplain, is a Roman Catholic priest who serves on the pastoral staff of a major hospital system in Des Moines. The second chaplain, Mary, is a volunteer chaplain with a southwest Iowa hospice and home health care agency. Marcus, the third chaplain, is a

pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who serves as the resident chaplain of a facility that specializes in the care of residents with chronic, confusing, dementing, illnesses (CCDI).⁷² The two sermons which the chaplains evaluated were delivered in May and July of 2005. The May sermon had a Mother's Day theme and was based upon Proverbs 31:28. The sermon in July was based upon Psalm 33:12 and carried a theme for Independence Day. Below are summaries of the reviews offered by the three chaplains. The actual texts of their analyses are included as Appendix C to this MAP.

A questionnaire was prepared for the chaplains to use as they evaluated the video tapes of the two sermons. The questions were intentionally open-ended so as to offer the chaplains a free hand in their evaluations. However, the questionnaire also served to prompt the chaplains to specifically focus on the element of reminiscing as a homiletical device and its implementation in the two sermons being reviewed. The three chaplains completed the questionnaires promptly and offered valuable insights and constructive reviews and criticisms of the sermons. In one case, Mary actually attended a worship service personally in which she observed the sermon being preached.

The first question in the questionnaire asked the chaplains to consider reminiscing as a viable homiletical technique and whether it served the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel. The question read:

In what ways did the use of reminiscing stories serve the homiletical purpose of presenting and proclaiming the Biblical message, especially God's grace and mercy in Jesus' death and resurrection? In what ways did it not do so?

⁷² The acronym "CCDI" is a new term that has only recently come into clinical use. Although it includes individuals with Alzheimer's disease, it is not limited to that diagnosis. It is intended to define all forms of dementia.

In the first sermon, which was written for Mother's Day, I began with a story of my own mother who desired as a young girl to become a nurse. To enter nursing school she needed a five dollar admission fee and a wristwatch with a second hand. She earned the five dollars herself while her father and my grandfather gave her his own watch to use while she was in training. She kept this watch for several years until she married my father who gave her a woman's watch later in her life.

David, the Roman Catholic chaplain, commented on this story in the first question and his comments indicated that he viewed the videotape of the sermon with several of his colleagues. Overall, David responded favorably to reminiscent preaching as a good idea. However, he was critical of my use of the technique:

“The reminiscing tended to overshadow the Biblical message rather than support it.”

As I reviewed the videotape myself, I noticed that the story consumed over five minutes before any mention of the gospel occurred. In the context of a worship service in the nursing home that lasts no longer than 30 minutes, I agree with David that this is too long a time. David went on to say:

“You want to proclaim the Gospel and bring this reminiscing back to God.”

An item of concern for Marcus was how the stories and memories were received by the residents who were hearing them. If the cognitive capacity of the residents was good, this method would work well. Marcus writes:

“I felt that as long as the memories of the resident is mostly intact, these were good sermons. If the memories are not intact, these sermons did not work well.”

Marcus explained his comment when he offered me a tour of the nursing home in which he serves as the staff chaplain. It is a much larger institution than the Greenfield Manor.

The nursing home has three distinct floors in which the residents are segregated by their individual physical and cognitive limitations. The first floor houses residents who still possess a significant amount of independence. The second and third floors are for residents who have diminishing levels of cognitive capacity. Marcus has individual worship services with the residents on each of the floors. He tailors his services to accommodate the residents on each of the three floors.

I told Marcus that in the Greenfield Manor the residents come to the worship services and listen to the sermons with a wide range of cognitive capacities. They range from those who live with significant independence to those residents who are in advanced dementia. The services were intended to specifically address the spiritual needs of residents in small, rural nursing homes as compared to a large facility in which he was ministering.

Although reminiscing could be employed in a large facility as well as a small nursing home under the right circumstances, Marcus is correct that in a worship service comprised mostly of residents with advanced dementia, reminiscing as a sermon device would not be a helpful method to convey the Gospel. In such a setting, Marcus states he uses only the simplest of Bible stories with very basic exposition of the text. In responding further to this first question, Marcus continued:

The Mother's Day sermon uses reminiscing in order to remind the residents how they first learned of God's love and God's mercy. This sermon guides them to remember that God's grace and mercy comes through Jesus' death and resurrection. The residents were encouraged to remember and use the memory of faith to guide their life.

Marcus indicated in this comment as well as in our discussion that he believes the Holy Spirit works in any expression of the Gospel regardless of the cognitive limitations

of the hearer. He was very supportive of including preaching in the worship activity within a nursing home. With this I agree. The power of the Word of God is not dependent upon a person's mind. Faith is not dependent upon the power of the mind. It rests upon a believing heart. He also mentioned that reminiscing specifically upon a person's spiritual memories should not be overlooked from the simple memories of a person's life.

The volunteer chaplain, Mary, personally attended the worship service and listened to the sermon that was delivered on Independence Day. In this sermon, I tried to incorporate VE Day (Victory in Europe) and VJ Day (Victory in Japan) as two dates the residents may remember. Regarding this sermon, Mary wrote:

Rev. Schweitzer read Psalm 33:12 as he tied [it] in [to] giving thanks, having gratitude for the sacrifices made and the faith people had then and now. He shared John 8:31, for freedom of sins forgiven and correlated the WW II victory for freedom to have everything we want and the freedom to practice our faith.

Mary's written review of the service and sermon was extensive. However, she did not offer significant criticism of the reminiscent story told nor its usefulness. She was quite complimentary of the worship service in general and of what she observed. She also expressed her appreciation for this ministry being conducted, especially the value of my expressing thanks to the residents for the sacrifices they made and that we are beneficiaries of their sacrifices even today. Mary suggested that by expressing genuine gratitude to the residents, they, in turn, would be more attentive and receptive to hearing the Gospel proclamation.

A significant point is the residents at the Greenfield Manor who attend the worship services and listen to the sermons have a relatively high level of cognitive ability overall and are able to participate in the worship services actively. This has been my

experience in ministering and serving residents in assisted living and nursing homes in general. Still, David cautioned that asking residents to remember specific dates may not be a useful.

“If anyone present suffered dementia or other memory loss, point[ing] to specific dates may not be the best use of reminiscing.”

Marcus offered similar criticism later in his questionnaire when he wrote:

“As I talked with Keith, these sermons were good for people whose minds were mostly intact. I think that asking people to remember things if their mind is not intact is a problem.”

This element of the sermon could have been better. Rather than “testing” the residents to remember a specific date, I could simply state the significance of the dates and allow their memories of those important events to return.

The second question in the questionnaire states:

Reminiscing in its simplest understanding is the process of remembering past events and stories in a person’s life. In the two sermons delivered to the residents at the Greenfield Manor, when did you hear such reminiscing?

Pertaining to the Independence Day sermon, Mary commented on the story in which I cited the particular dates (May 7, 1945 – VE Day) and the formal surrender of the Japanese (September 2, 1945):

[Rev. Schweitzer] immediately engaged residents in the non-threatening, bonding discussion in which most residents did not appear to struggle to remember the events nor did some appear to be shamed because they couldn’t remember. His approach and delivery method was inclusive, gentle, and nurturing.

Mary and David were not offering contradictory comments regarding my mentioning specific dates in the sermon and asking the residents to remember their significance.

Mary was aware that I had no desire to confuse the residents. Neither was I intending to embarrass the residents or make them feel uncomfortable. Had it been a preacher the

residents did not know, this may have been the case. Nevertheless, the same purpose could have been accomplished simply by telling the residents the significance of the dates.

David and his colleagues, while acknowledging that reminiscing was “heard all the way through,” also wrote:

“We felt you needed to bring Jesus all the way through also.”

David would specifically draw attention to one of the most glaring problems with the Independence Day sermon:

“You need balance – 28 references to I, 30 plus me/my but only 4 to Christ.”

In reviewing this sermon, I agree that the story (in this case regarding the end of World War II) had again taken up a considerable amount of time. David and his colleagues indeed identified a serious error that needs to be addressed. A potential problem with using reminiscing as a sermonic device is the propensity for the reminiscing to “become” the sermon. Rather than serving the purpose of elucidating the Gospel message, the reminiscing can potentially obscure the message of Christ. Consequently, to use reminiscing as an aid in the sermon requires regular monitoring of the message. A possible method for this could be to occasionally tape record the sermon delivered at the nursing home for personal review and correction. This should be done in the parish as well.

Pertaining to the Mother’s Day sermon David also commented:

“The mother/watch story was most memorable and offered the greatest potential for homiletical development, such as gifts God has given us, etc.”

“[The] sermon may have been enriched by recall[ing] Mary as the mother of Jesus or other Biblical stories.”

Whether David was here referring to some aspect of Catholicism's Mariology, I was not able to discern. However, the image of Mary being a very faithful mother to Jesus as well as Jesus being a devoted son to His mother is one the Scriptures depict and could have been incorporated in a way that served the purpose of the sermon.

With their answers to the first two questions, the three chaplains indeed seem to be in agreement that the premise of reminiscent preaching is a good one and worthy of further development and use. However, they are correct in their critiques that it can be "overdone" and poses the risk of the reminiscing story becoming the dominant feature of the sermon rather than the Gospel message of Christ. Their comments further suggest that this method of preaching requires time, effort, and practice to master.

The third question turns the attention from the preacher to the hearers:

What did you see going on with the residents as you watched them listening to the sermons?

The answers to this question were generally favorable. David stated a very helpful observation when he wrote pertaining to the worship service in general and not particularly to the sermon:

[The] service was [a]very oral/aural service – preaching, music, pastoral prayer. Perhaps supplement by appealing to other senses . . . such as visual and tactile. Could you have shown photos of children playing with mothers, old newspaper headlines from World War II, etc. Or given them an object that they could hold and touch that may have evoked memories – a cross, baby clothing, etc., that they could have taken home with them. Or asked them in advance to bring an object special to them.

I have done this on occasion. However, I believe this (like reminiscing) can be overdone.

The objects can become the dominant feature of the sermon rather than the message.

Likewise, a few of the residents have told me they do not necessarily care for having some kind of visual object to be included in the service and sermon. Rather, they desire

to have a sense of sanctity in the worship. They seek to have a devotion that is truly worshipful. They prefer the time of worship have a sacred aura as this is how they remember worship being in their earlier years. The sermon also is more accepted and appreciated when it is delivered compassionately and verbally. Ultimately, the residents desire to hear of their Lord.

David continued with his answer regarding the residents' involvement in the sermon:

“The residents seem engaged.”

“You really showed a caring [spirit] for these residents.”

“The residents seemed to be paying very close attention. They appear to have a great participation in the service.”

Mary included in her comments:

I noticed some people were listening intently while some were poised in thought. I saw one lady in particular staring toward the ceiling as if remembering distinctly where she was, what she heard, and who she saw on the days mentioned. That same lady returned her focus to the Scripture readings and actively listened, so I did not interpret her pensive thoughts as dementia-related or catatonic.

Some people nodded their heads affirmatively as he correlated the Scripture passages to the sacrifices of war. This action indicated to me that they were able to remember the “then” and relate it to the sacrifices our Lord made for our salvation.

Marcus also wrote:

The video showed some of the residents. I felt that the men especially like the sermon on the days of the end of the war. These were days the men knew as days of coming home in victory. I saw signs in the men of that celebration and victory and knowing also God's victory.

David offered a helpful comment in suggesting that some “quiet time” be allotted for the residents to have the opportunity for the memories to re-form in their minds while they hear the reminiscing occurring in the sermon and to “think about the theme in their own

lives.” Including some pauses in the sermon can serve this purpose. The residents themselves indicated in their own interviews the importance to speak with sufficient volume due to diminished hearing as well as speaking at a slow rate. To add a moment of silence could be easily incorporated into the message.

These answers reinforce the pressing need for this kind of ministry in our contemporary age. The residents genuinely appreciate having a consistent schedule of worship with a pastor they trust. They demonstrate their appreciation by actively participating as well as their generosity in telling their life stories that I may incorporate in the sermons. As faithful people of God, the residents truly are who make these occasions of worship special.

The fourth question asks how reminiscing might address the increasing need for ministry to the aging in the nursing home setting:

As the need for ministering to the spiritual needs of residents in nursing homes increases in the future, in what ways do you think reminiscing (recalling and retelling actual stories from the past of the both the residents as well as the preacher) would serve as a helpful method of preaching, particularly within the context of worship in a nursing home?

With this question, David returned to his concern about asking residents to remember specific dates:

To ask them (the residents) to remember specific dates may not be the best. Perhaps giving the event and asking what they remember of the event, what they were doing, what was special for them in that event – more open ended questions. What was their job? What were they doing then? Think back where you were when Pearl Harbor was bombed?

Be careful how you ask of the memory so as not to stimulate sadness. If they had a miscarriage or no children or not know[ing] their own Mom. [A] very wide range of experiences of motherhood. [You] do not want to create the negative for them.

To David's comment, I partially disagree. Although it should never be my purpose to intentionally create negative thoughts or feelings, doing so may not always be a bad thing. Using a reminiscing story from one resident may bring to mind a similar story in another resident. One resident may indeed have a bad life story or painful memories of his mother while other residents may have very good memories of their mother. Painful memories can have the very therapeutic benefit for the resident in coming to terms with unresolved issues that may need to be addressed in the future. Such matters as reconciling with a family member may become possible. Another possibility may be the resident reconciling with himself some long held grudge against the church.

Interestingly, Mary addressed an aspect of this specialized ministry that had been previously considered in this MAP regarding the strong faith background of many of the residents who now reside in nursing homes. She writes:

The generation living in nursing home environments today typically has a very strong Christian belief system. (It will be interesting to see how strong faith is among residents 25-35 years from now!) This generation also has had a tremendous work ethic influenced by the golden rule. Therefore, it is a win-win combination to tie in the stories from the Bible in the preaching in health care environments. We actually "reminisce" when we read or share the stories in the Bible, so doing so with nursing home residents is a natural fit.

Marcus comments:

I believe recalling and retelling stories helps people relate to what has happened in their life and in their faith life. I believe that residents who have had a lot of life experiences can use these experiences to increase their faith with the work of the Holy Spirit.

These comments are on target. Mary's concern for the future is well founded. Her concern is not limited just to ministry in the nursing home but to the ministry as a whole in the church. The residents who currently live in nursing homes are accustomed

to sacrifice and to giving of themselves for the benefit of others. Whether or not subsequent generations have the same characteristics remains to be seen.

The fifth question offered the chaplains the opportunity for final comments both positive and negative concerning the sermons they observed and evaluated:

What other comments – positive or negative – would you offer regarding any other aspect of my preaching?

Mary's comments concluded this way:

I was totally impressed with your ease in hospitality and socialization prior to the worship service. I watched you engage the participants in meaningful dialogue in which you shared genuine concerns about their health, family, etc. I have seen some preachers become occupied with the details (especially if they were being videotaped) thereby ignoring the needs of the people or ministering to them in any manner. To me, it was apparent this was not just another service or function of your role as a local minister, but rather a calling to acknowledge Christ in each and every one gathering to worship. Your gentle approach displayed unconditional love as you "walked" among them.

Overall, I left the worship service with a deep sense of gratitude! I am thankful you are open to the calling to minister to an underserved and often forgotten population! I truly appreciate the opportunity to practice my/our faith in inter-denominational and non-denominational ways. I am eternally grateful to the veterans who gave their lives so we could experience freedoms today; and I am reminded of the greatest sacrifice of all – our Lord Jesus Christ!

I appreciate Mary's comments. This is an aspect of ministry I care about very much. The people in the nursing homes are our mothers and fathers to whom we have the command from God to honor. I seek to improve my preaching in this context of ministry as it also carries great benefit to the preaching in the parish. There is no ulterior motive. To be a better preacher for the benefit of God's people is the intent in this work. I do not subscribe to the premise that the word of God can stand alone and does not need the aid of human preparation. I have heard too many sermons in which the lack of any preparation was obvious. This does not serve the Gospel. Neither do I believe that it

pleases God. Human skill can and should be developed and practiced to serve the Gospel in preaching. This is, in my view, part of my call as a pastor.

Marcus again cautioned in asking the residents to “remember” something in particular:

“When the speaker shares a memory, it can be useful and good. The memory may help another remember but I would not count on use of the memory of a resident.”

David also reiterated the need to bring more of the Gospel into the reminiscing.

“The power of God needs more strokes and the family of Christ needs to be more up front and center.”

By this comment, I am presuming David means in part to mention more often Jesus’ own family of Mary, Joseph, and His brothers and sisters. Again, David is indicating the danger in reminiscent preaching when the story of the preacher or the residents overcomes the story of salvation and of God’s grace. David also continued:

“Preach a story – one that fosters residents to reminisce about their own experiences – and bring out more clearly the power of God.”

“Look to the power of God, asking how they experienced the Lord at that time (World War II) in their lives.”

“How their experiences of self fits into God’s plan for them.”

“Your heart was with the residents. Your relationship was with them. It was personal.”

Marcus made a concluding observation that though the reminiscing technique carries with it certain risks, he commended it as an appropriate way to bring the Gospel message to the residents in a nursing home. Ultimately, it is not the preacher but the power of God’s Holy Spirit working through the spoken word.

“I believe we preach to a spirit, soul, and angel that can use memory but can more effectively use how God acts today as well as in memory.”

All three of the chaplains who evaluated these two sermons wrote favorably of reminiscent preaching as a helpful homiletical method. With cautions such as the storytelling not overshadowing the Gospel message, that the preacher is not the central character in any story within the context of proclaiming the Gospel, and remembering the mental acuity of the residents, the chaplains overall seemed to express approval of this method. David's evaluations were most helpful. His criticisms of the failure to keep a good balance between the story and the Gospel were on target. I thank him for pointing this out in his answers. To address this, further practice as well as monitoring and review of the reminiscing method is needed. His suggestion to use objects to help the residents' memories also deserves careful consideration.

The evaluations and reviews offered by the three chaplains served to accomplish the second goal and fill the missing gap in the research for this MAP. The chaplains offered necessary and very helpful commentary into my attempts to implement reminiscing in the sermons to which they considered. Their constructive comments indeed commended the method as an appropriate homiletical technique that can be used to great benefit in the nursing home. However, as it is a helpful method, it is also one that carries with it potential risks and hazards of which the preacher needs to be aware.

CHAPTER SIX

REMINISCENT PREACHING – IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Serving God's people who are residents in the assisted living and nursing home facilities of the Greenfield Manor with meaningful worship and a thoughtful sermon is a special part of my pastoral ministry. It brings with it tremendous blessings and a substantive sense that this ministry is important and worthwhile. This ministry also enjoys the strong support of the members of my congregation who see it as a valuable outreach in the community.

The design and outcome of this MAP did not produce results that were necessarily surprising. A sermon should always be prepared and delivered with the best efforts of human skill. This combined with a joyful message of forgiveness and salvation that comes in Christ would be well received by any group of believing hearers. It also has the promise of God that it will not return to Him void. Perhaps the best purpose this MAP has served is simply to elucidate this particular aspect of the preaching ministry that has not received significant consideration in the past.

The reluctance of the residents to offer constructive criticism of the sermons was not so much because they could not but that they would not. I believe they were genuinely fearful to say anything they might perceive as "negative" and hurtful to me. In doing so, they may have feared they would "chase" me away from the nursing home.

Indeed, the key to this type of ministry is a genuine relationship with the residents who view me as truly being their pastor.

Looking toward the future of this preaching ministry, a few observations can be made. The model of reminiscent preaching is one that works well in the nursing home. It is a model I need to continue to use and refine. Like all preaching methods, it has great benefit as well as certain risks. It is also a model that can work well in the parish ministry. Reminiscing is not something exclusive with the aged. Persons of every age reminisce, including children who may miss an “old” home or “old” friends if the family has recently moved.

Neither is reminiscent preaching the only method that can be used effectively in the nursing home setting. As was suggested by one of the chaplains in his review, the use of visual aids can be a very helpful tool in preaching. I hope to make more use of this method in the future. The possibilities for this method are significant. Residents feel honored when I use an item from their room as a visual object lesson. They are truly thrilled that something particularly meaningful to them is used for the benefit of the other residents. It is also a method when applied with the Gospel message of salvation in Jesus Christ penetrates deep into the heart and mind.

Similarly, aged residents are also overwhelmed when they are complimented and “thanked” for their lives, their service, and the sacrifices they have made. These are the people who taught my generation the Christian faith. They also modeled it in their own lives and touched the people in their families with the truth of the gospel. Genuine appreciation should be generously applied in nursing home preaching. To pass the

Christian faith to the next generation is an enormous and eternal blessing. Let us say “thank you” to these residents for bringing Christ to us.

Whatever form it may take or method that may be applied, preaching in the nursing home is more helpful when it is gentle and kind. The residents in the nursing home are frail and weak. They can become very frightened and confused with anything they may sense as being harsh or abusive. The gospel message of salvation needs to be graceful and uplifting. Speaking with a strong but kind tone of voice is essential in this setting.

In the end, this ministry and setting for preaching is best accomplished when it is relational. This means spending time with the residents in the nursing home on a regular and consistent basis in addition to the occasions for worship. It also means the pastor does well to consider doing this worship and preaching ministry on a weekly basis. With the continuity of preaching on a regular and frequent schedule, the residents quickly learn to expect and anticipate the pastor’s arrival. This in itself serves to give the residents a sense of hope for the future when there may not otherwise be much hope in their lives.

As a result of being in the facility frequently, I have had the opportunity to counsel with family members of residents who were having a difficult time facing the reality of their loved one soon dying. The questions of life and death, salvation, and the very real uncertainty of a loved one’s eternal destiny take on significant importance while standing at the side of a death bed.

Similarly, I have had the opportunity to preside over the funerals of some of the residents, giving me the occasion to proclaim salvation in Jesus Christ to many more people. I have also been invited to share with many residents and their families milestone

events such as 65th and 75th wedding anniversaries and centurial birthdays. A genuine pastoral relationship and an intrinsic bond of trust has developed with the residents. This is the work of ministry.

One final blessing from this ministry deserves a brief comment. It has not caused me to become “insulated” from my ministry to young people and young families. My relationships with children, teenagers, and young families in my congregation are also much more pastoral with a personal life view that has been significantly broadened as a result of my ministry among the aged. We all can learn much from God’s senior saints. From them I have seen that much quiet strength still rests within them despite their declining health. Their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is a “mature” faith that has endured the tests of time. These lessons the aged stand ready to teach to the young.

In closing, I sincerely thank the director and staff of the Greenfield Manor in graciously allowing me free access to accomplish this MAP. In no manner was I restricted or denied access to the residents to conduct the interviews or to videotape the specific sermons written and delivered for the needed research. Everybody – staff, residents, and family members together – knew this was an important and worthwhile project. For the freedom they granted to me, I am genuinely appreciative.

To the three chaplains who offered constructive evaluations and criticisms, I also offer my genuine appreciation. Particularly am I thankful for their punctuality in returning their questionnaires when time was of the essence. How well I know that everybody’s time is valuable in this day and age. Without their comments, criticisms, and suggestions on how to improve the reminiscing preaching method, this MAP would not have been successful.

To the residents of the Greenfield Manor I extend my heartfelt love and appreciation. These faithful people of God are a source of much joy in my life. For all of them, they were most pleased to be participants in a doctoral program. This was a first for them. Even as this MAP is now completed, our ministry together is not. Every Wednesday morning at 10:15 am, we gather together in the activities room at the Greenfield Manor for a celebration of our common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is truly an opportunity to worship the Lord and we all look forward to it.

I hope and pray that other pastors will consider this ministry. Great and wonderful blessings await. These are fellow saints with whom we will spend eternity in heaven. Let us as under-shepherds of the Lord Jesus serve them as they have spent their entire lives in service to us to the glory of God.

APPENDIX A

MODEL SERMONS WRITTEN AND DELIVERED FOR THE MAP

MAP Sermon Matrix

Sermon 1 May 11, 2005	Mother's Day	Her Children Rise Up and Call Her Blessed	Proverbs 31:28
Sermon 2 June 29, 2005	Death of a Loved One	Now Hope Does Not Disappoint Us	Romans 5:1-5
Sermon 3 July 6, 2005	Independence Day	Blessed is the Nation	Psalms 33:12
Sermon 4 August 17, 2005	The Importance of Worship	Even Them I Will Bring to My Holy Mountain	Isaiah 56:1,6-8
Sermon 5 September 7, 2005	The Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina	Are We Any Less a Sinner?	Luke 13:1-5
Sermon 6 October 25, 2005	Reformation Celebration	Their Sin I Will Remember No More	Jeremiah 31: 31-34

Sermon 1
May 11, 2005

Proverbs 31:28
Rev. Keith Schweitzer

Her Children Rise Up and Call Her Blessed

“Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.”
(Proverbs 31:28)

I don't know for certain as only the Lord knows for sure. But I have a very strong sense this will be the last Mother's Day I will be able to spend with my Mom in this lifetime. Her health continues to decline very rapidly. She is not able to be with us anymore during our Wednesday morning devotions. She is not eating very much and she sleeps most of the time now.

Early next month, I am scheduled to go to the seminary to take my final classes for my doctorate work. I'm a little apprehensive about going and leaving Mom for two weeks. However, I know that Mom would tell me to go if she were able. Mom has always been my strongest supporter of everything I've wanted to do in my life.

Let me tell you a story about my Mom. I know you will be able to relate to it. And I

hope you enjoy it. My mother had a wonderful opportunity in her life that very few young girls had during her lifetime. She was able to go to nursing school after she graduated from high school. She would tell me she needed a five dollar admission fee and a wrist watch with a second hand on it in order to begin nursing school in her little town of McKinney, Texas.

My grandfather was able to meet one of these two requirements but not both. My mother worked to earn the 5 dollars. My grandfather gave my mother his own man's wristwatch with a second hand. It was not a ladies' watch but it would serve the purpose. Mom wore that watch during the entire time she was in nursing school. She even wore it for several years after she began practicing nursing before my father gave her a women's watch.

Mom knew she had been afforded a wonderful opportunity to receive advanced education after high school. She worked and studied very hard. She made excellent grades. She never broke the rules of the nursing school. She was always in the nursing student's residence before curfew. As a result of the fact that both my mother and father had the very rare opportunity to attend school after high school, my brother and I had many nice things

as my parents did well in their particular working careers.

My mother inculcated in me a deep appreciation for education. That is why I am working on my doctorate degree. Mom was my biggest fan and supporter of my pursuing this degree. She was very pleased when I told her I had been accepted into the doctorate program. She knew the value of a good education.

She also knew the value of a good Christian education. Just as Mom saw to my secular education, she also saw to my Christian education. I attended church and Sunday School every week. I attended midweek school and confirmation classes. Mom would ask me what I had learned. Even when I began studying at the seminary, Mom would want to know what I was learning. She would want to know if I was learning the truth about the Word of God. She even came to the seminary one time to visit me. She went with me to my Greek class. The Greek professor told her that because she was a nurse, she knew more Greek than she thought she did because so many medical terms are from Greek words. Mom felt so honored to sit in on my classes at the seminary.

I love my Mom dearly. Indeed, today I say to all of you that I “rise up and call her blessed.” I will miss her deeply when the time comes that the Lord calls her home.

But even that will be a time to celebrate. Her suffering will be ended and she will be in eternal glory with the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. I rejoice that she believes in the Lord Jesus Christ and knows Him as her Savior.

I know you can tell wonderful stories about your mothers as well. The truths of life that they taught you. And I also celebrate with you who are yourselves mothers. Let me say on behalf of all of your children, a very happy Mother’s Day. Let me say that I rise up and call you blessed also. I thank you for the witness you are giving by being here for our weekly Wednesday morning devotion.

We are never too old to learn something new. It is good for us to learn something new every day. And that is especially important when it comes to our faith and knowledge in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are lifelong students of God no matter how old we are. That was an important lesson Mom taught me. I’m thrilled to be able to share it with you. In Jesus’ name, may we always learn and grow. To believe and trust in Him unto eternal life in heaven. Amen.

Sermon 2
June 29, 2005

Romans 5:1-5
Rev. Keith Schweitzer

Now Hope Does Not Disappoint

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

(Romans 5:1-2)

I was already asleep in my dorm room. It had been a very busy day of classes and studying. I was tired. And I was ready to come home. Only two more days of classes to go. At 11:30 pm there was a loud knock on my door. Two young men from seminary security had come to tell me the late night seminary switchboard operator had received an urgent message from Mike here at the Greenfield Manor. Mom's health had deteriorated significantly and he was suggesting I come back to Greenfield as quickly as I could. Her death could occur at any time.

I went to the seminary switchboard and spoke to Mike regarding Mom's situation. It was grave. I made several phone calls to the

airline to change my plane reservation and to plan for transportation from the airport in Omaha back to Greenfield. I was back home and by Mom's side on Thursday afternoon. Indeed, her death was imminent.

I stayed with Mom through the rest of Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and into Sunday morning, June 19th. I was by her side and holding her hand when she breathed her last breath in this life at about ten minutes after eight on Sunday morning. That is when she breathed her first breath in eternal life with the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven.

We had Mom's funeral in Houston last week. This passage from Romans, chapter 5 was Mom's favorite passage that she wanted read and for me to preach on at her funeral. I officiated at Mom's funeral. No, it was not a difficult thing to do. It was an honor and a privilege for me. It's very easy to do the funeral for a faithful Christian who dies in faith in the Lord.

I know you have had occasions in your life where you had to say goodbye to a loved one. Be it your own parents or your beloved husband or wife. It is a time that can serve to prompt us to pause and reflect upon our own lives. To remember the person and the special

things that made that person unique. It can also serve to remind us yet again about what God has done for us so that death no longer has any power over us.

I would not be telling the truth if I told you that I don't fear death. I'm sinful. I deserve God's eternal judgment. But I'm very thankful and I rejoice that God has accomplished our very salvation and has given to us eternal life through Jesus Christ. Yes, He died on the cross. But He also came alive again and is alive forevermore. And so shall Mom. As shall we.

There were two things Mom wanted me to remember in life. 1. "Manifest a strong sense of self-discipline." And 2. "Bow your back and grit your teeth and get the job done even if it kills you." Mom had a strong back and a lot of grit. Alzheimer's disease robbed Mom of her mind and her memory but it could not touch her faith.

Despite the trials and tribulations which afflict us in our lives, they, too, serve as blessings from God. For tribulation produces perseverance, character, and hope. And hope does not disappoint. The love of God had been poured out on our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

For we remember that our Savior also suffered unimaginable trials in His life. He accomplished for us what no one else could do. By His perfect life, His innocent death, and His glorious resurrection, we have been justified by faith. Faith which God has given to us. Faith which was passed on by our parents to us and then on to our children as well.

The trials and tribulations in our lives give all of us a stronger back and more grit. And we need that to make our way through this life, don't we? For that I admire greatly my mother.

Her suffering is over. Her work here in this life is finished. She has breathed her last breath and now she lives in the eternal splendor of heaven. I could not be more thrilled for her.

I rejoice for the same reason for all of you, dear friends. We worship our Lord Jesus Christ here as fellow believers in Him who has accomplished our justification as St. Paul describes in his epistle to the Romans. We have been baptized and we have been united with Christ both in His death and in His resurrection.

We will see our loved ones again. But even more so, I will see my Lord Jesus who is the perfect Son of God and who has given to us this precious hope and promises. Alleluia. Amen!

Sermon 3
July 6, 2005

Psalm 33:12
Rev. Keith Schweitzer

Blessed is the Nation

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance.”
(Psalm 33:12)

Our celebration of the Fourth of July this year is a milestone year particularly for you who lived through the ravages of World War II. This year is the 60th anniversary of the end of war both in Europe and in the Pacific.

In the spring of 1945, 60 years ago, Allied troops were victorious on all fronts in the European theater. The Soviet Red Army captured Vienna in April and took Berlin, the Nazi capital, on May 2nd. In the West, the 21st Army Group of British Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery was in control in northern Germany, southern Denmark, and the Netherlands. On May 7th, in a schoolhouse in the French town of Rheims, German forces unconditionally surrendered to the Allies under General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Colonel General Alfred Jodl, army chief of staff, represented Germany.

On September 2, 1945, aboard the battleship USS Missouri anchored in Tokyo Bay, representatives of the Japanese empire signed the document of unconditional surrender to the Allied forces officially ending World War II. Delegates from the United States, Great Britain, China, the Soviet Union, Australia, Canada, France, the Netherlands, and New Zealand signed for the Allies.

I have no doubt that these very historic moments continue to be deeply engrained into your memory. You lived to hear and see these events. I have come to know of them through the reading of history books and from listening to the stories which have been shared with me through the years.

But to my senior brothers and sisters in Christ. I want to tell you that I am aware that because of your tremendous sacrifices during those terrible years, you literally saved our nation. It is because of you and the providence of a loving and merciful God that we live in a nation of such prosperity and abundance unlike the world has ever seen. For your sacrifice and hardships which you endured, I want to say “thank you” for what you did and for the prosperity to which we today enjoy as a result.

Yes, I served in the United States Army for seven years. I believe as you do, that to serve my country is something I found myself bound to do. And which I was honored to do. It was in a very small way intended to shoulder my share of responsibility of preserving the freedom we all enjoy here in America.

Our celebration of freedom this year is a very special occasion as I know it is for you. And we particularly as Christian Americans have even more to celebrate and which we rejoice this our 4th of July celebration here at the Greenfield Manor.

We rejoice and worship the Lord Jesus Christ who is the author and perfecter of our faith. It is in Him that we have not only the freedom here in the United States but also the freedom from sin, death, and eternal condemnation. The psalmist is correct. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." We pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will always be the God of our nation.

I know it is easy to talk more about the historic events that occurred during this time frame 60 years ago. And to reminisce about the men who actually did the fighting. But I also know that you, the women who kept the home fires burning also sacrificed greatly here on the

"home front." The women of the country built the bulk of the war materiel. You kept the farms going and planted victory gardens. You lived with rationed items because they were needed for the war effort. Life at home would forever be changed. Again, ladies, I salute you and I thank you.

This fourth of July is a special day to celebrate. But more so because it is due to the blessings and providence of God that it has any meaning for us at all. The events of human history are ultimately under His guidance. His holy will is accomplished according to His good purposes. Even if we don't necessarily understand them.

Our freedom is a very precious gift. We do well to remember from whom our freedom comes. It is because our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to suffer unspeakable torture and endure the pain of the cross that we have been liberated from the prison of our camp. And as His forgiven people, we make up the Lord's Army to use His holy weapons not to kill but to enliven. His Holy Word brings the message of peace in Jesus Christ to a world that continues to need it. I pray that God will continue to bless you and God bless America. Amen.

Sermon 4
August 17, 2005

Isaiah 56:1,6-8
Rev. Keith Schweitzer

**Even Them I Will Bring to
My Holy Mountain**

“Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful to My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar.”

(Isaiah 56:7)

I know that one of the wonderful things about our Wednesday morning devotions is that for some of you this is the first time in your entire life that you have worshipped the Lord with any sense of regularity. You were not a member of any congregation nor did you worship anywhere while you were growing up or while you were married and were raising your children. Let me just say that I am thrilled that you are with us during these worship devotions. It is my hope and prayer that you may come to a great faith and knowledge in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Let me reminisce with you a little bit about an aspect of my life. Although I have gone to church most of my life, I did not come

from a family that was particularly religious. My parents did not manifest the Christian faith to me. Oh yes! We went to church and I went to Sunday School. But much of it was not carried over into our home.

I am the only Lutheran in my family. The rest of my extended family are either members of the Southern Baptist Church or members of the Campbellite Church of Christ. It continues to be a mystery to many members of my family as to how I could possibly have ended up becoming a Lutheran. Much more so, going to the seminary and becoming a Lutheran pastor.

One of the reasons I was drawn to the Lutheran Church was because I resonated very strongly with some words that Martin Luther wrote in the Small Catechism. You know the Apostles' Creed that we confess every week? The Creed can be divided into three sections or “articles.” Each article speaks to one person of the Triune Godhead – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the third and final article of the Creed, this is what we say:

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the

resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Martin Luther's explanation to this article of the Creed has always been a source of great comfort for me. He wrote:

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the truth faith.

Now, I know for many of you this is very simple. Of course we all believe this statement is true. But this one simple statement is a serious stumbling block for many members of my family. You see, many people believe that we *can* by our own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ and come to Him. Not only that we *can* but we *must* come to Him by my own reason or strength.

In one sense, I have always felt like a foreigner in my own family. But that is quite alright because I know that God graciously accepts foreigners into His family of faith and into the Holy Christian Church. This is what

God says in this passage in Isaiah. The chosen people of God, Israel, were not chosen simply to be God's "privileged" people. They were selected to be God's ambassadors and spokesmen for the rest of the world. They were to serve as the living example of God being among His people and ruling over His creation.

Because the simple fact of the matter is, we are all foreigners to God by virtue of our sin. We would all be lost and condemned forever because our sin has led us to be separated from God.

But just as God welcomed the foreigner to His temple and to be among His people, so also He lovingly and gracious welcomes us into his family through His Son and our Savior Jesus Christ. It is by His life and death on the cross at Calvary that He has brought reconciliation between we and God. He has brought forgiveness of all of our sins. In our baptism we have been adopted as God's sons and daughters. We are now brothers and sisters of the same family. This is what we confess in the Creed. We are "the holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints." Those are two phrases that describe the same thing. Thank and praise the Lord that we are part of His family and we will live with Him forever in heaven. Amen!

Sermon 5
September 7, 2005

Luke 13:1-5
Rev. Keith Schweitzer

“Are We Any Less a Sinner?”

“And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things?’” (Luke 13:2)

This has been a difficult time for all of us as we have been watching on the television the horrible pictures of the devastation caused by hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and along Mississippi and Alabama. Many of you may have family members or friends who live in that part of the country and you may be concerned about them. Or you may just have a sense of helplessness and asking yourself, “What I can I do to help?”

One of the saddest things I have heard in the aftermath of the hurricane is some “evangelist” in righteous indignation proclaim that “New Orleans is sin city,” that it was only a matter of time before God would visit his judgment upon the debauchery of the city. Perhaps now the people of the city will amend their wicked ways and turn to the Lord. In all

honesty, dear friends, I doubt very much that will happen. As soon as they are able to rebuild, I think many of the people will go right back to doing what they used to do. That is the nature of sin. And we all have that same sinful nature.

Jesus posed this same question to His disciples. It’s the same question we can honestly ask ourselves today as well. Is the debauchery of New Orleans any worse than the debauchery of Des Moines? Or how about the debauchery right here in Greenfield? I have to admit to you that a lot of wicked things happen right here in this little town in which we live.

The fact of the matter is, we are no less sinful than any person who lives in New Orleans or anywhere else. We are all equally wicked and we all deserve God’s judgment to be visited down upon us.

So why do such tragedies occur? Is it God’s judgment upon us? Yes, in the sense that we live in a fallen creation. We live in a sinful world. And this is part and parcel of what happens when we live in a fallen creation. This is what we can expect as a consequence of our sin. No, this is not the way it was intended to be. God created a perfect world. And everything in it was good. But Adam and Eve

caused creation to fall and we now live in that fallen state until such time as God decides to bring His creation to an end.

But a disaster such as this can also serve God's good purposes and a very different way. This disaster more than likely *has* caused many people to re-think their lives. This demonstration of God's power perhaps has brought many people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for that we can truly rejoice. Such an occasion as this also serves to bring out the goodness of people all across our nation.

I know there have been many complaints about how slow the response was to help the people of New Orleans. I have to admit to you that I am surprised and amazed that the response has been as good as it has been in just the few days since the storm came ashore. The outpouring of relief aid is almost incomprehensible.

God has told us that ultimately everything works together for good to those who love Him. We do not always understand why such things as this occur. Why so many people must suffer in the wake of such a disaster. But we do know that it is still ultimately God's creation and He continues to rule over His creation as He sees fit.

Jesus tells His disciples that such occasions are not to demonstrate that some people are worse sinners than others. But He does say that tragedy should lead us to repentance. To lead us once again to face our sin, to ask forgiveness, and to rejoice in the Lord that indeed we do have the forgiveness of all of our sins.

This is what God has ultimately done for us. The full fury of God's judgment has literally passed by us. It has missed us. We have not taken the full force of God's anger and punishment. Jesus did that for us when He died on the cross. There He felt the full fury of God's divine and sovereign judgment for the sins of the whole world. And in Jesus glorious resurrection, we have been delivered from our sin, and we now live as people who have literally been rescued from our sin. We live in the safe haven of God's perfect love and we will live with Him forever in heaven.

No, the people of New Orleans are not any worse sinners than anybody else. They did not deserve God's judgment and punishment any more than we all do. But thanks be to God, that His will is ultimately accomplished through His Son and our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon 6
October 25, 2005

Jeremiah 31:31-34
Rev. Keith Schweitzer

“Their Sin I Will Remember No More”

“No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord, For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

(Jeremiah 31:34)

If you all will indulge me a little, I want to tell you story. It is a story that, though most of you are not Lutheran, still has had an impact to which all of us are beneficiaries even today.

This coming Sunday is Reformation Sunday. October 31st is a special Sunday for we as Lutherans because this is the day that Martin Luther, in a great act of courage, nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. During his time, the church was selling pieces of paper in which people thought they could actually buy God’s forgiveness. The pieces of paper (called indulgences) could be bought not only to help the soul of the person who purchased the

document but they could also be bought for the benefit of loved ones and family members who had already died. If the person were willing to spend enough money, they could get the person all the way to heaven.

Martin Luther protested against this practice stating it had no support in the Scriptures. He was right. Indulgences can nowhere be found in the Scriptures.

But this is not the most important thing we as Lutherans celebrate on Reformation Day. We also celebrate the wonderful truth that we cannot earn our way to heaven in any way. We cannot buy our way into heaven. Nor can we do anything else to gain our way to heaven. We are sinners. And by virtue of the fact that we are sinful, we have no hope of ever being with our Lord or to be reconciled to Him.

That is what our Lord Jesus Christ has done. Even in the Old Testament, God promised that He would send a Savior, a Messiah, the Christ. We know that the Savior is the Lord Jesus Christ. God said that He would make a new covenant with His chosen people that would be different than the one He first made with Abraham. As He promised the people of Israel – His chosen people that He would deliver them from their bondage and

slavery in Egypt, so He made a new covenant that He would deliver all of us from the bondage of our sin.

This is the truth which Martin Luther discovered. To try to “work” our way into heaven, to try to earn God’s favor only leaves us more and more in despair. Leaves us knowing that no matter how hard we may try to work for God, we can never do enough. As sinners, we cannot please God.

But God has not left us to fend for ourselves. He has not left us without any hope. God has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. We have been redeemed and reconciled to God *sola gratia* which means by “grace alone.” We are not made right with God because of what we have done or failed to do. We are made right with God by grace alone because of what Jesus has already done for us.

This is the very reason Jesus came into the world. He is the Savior to whom God promised throughout the Scriptures. He lived a perfect life and He suffered and died on the cross for us so that we need not fear or worry about trying to do anything to please God. Jesus has already done that for us. And as God says, because of this, “*their sin, I will remember no more.*” In Christ, we truly are a new creation.

Whether we are Lutheran or not, we are all members of the family of God. We are part of His church here on earth and we will live with Him as part of the church triumphant with Him in heaven.

But we can all thank Martin Luther for being a bold and courageous man of God who brought to light the very simple yet profound truth that we cannot earn our way to heaven. And we certainly can’t buy it. But we have been made right with God through His grace alone in His Son and our Lord Jesus Christ. With His death on the cross, He has taken away our sin. In our baptism, we have had our sins totally and completely washed away.

This is the truth of the new covenant that we teach to our children and grandchildren. We are saved *sola gratia* – purely by God’s divine, holy, and perfect grace. This is the truth we celebrate every Wednesday morning when we gather together for mini-church.

I hope you have a wonderful celebration this coming weekend. As we observe not only Halloween but the more important festival of the Reformation. We are all heirs of what Martin Luther did for us. But we are even more blessed because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Amen!

APPENDIX B

CASE STUDY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Interview Transcript 1 – Geraldine

I've been here in Iowa for three years now. You've been here at the Greenfield Manor that entire time?

No, not quite. I was here two years May 7th. Your mother came here a little after me. She was in the new assisted living residence. I can't remember for sure but it was two years in May.

Fontanelle was originally your home?

Greenfield was really my home when I came here. I was in Fontanelle for 8 years and then I moved to Greenfield with my job with the phone company.

You worked for the phone company?

Yes, for 38 years. I transferred to Greenfield with the United Telephone Company of Iowa.

When did you retire?

In 1917.

No, that can't be right. How about sometime in the 1970's? What year were you born?

1915.

Did you begin working for the phone company perhaps when you were twenty years old? In 1935, you would have been twenty years old. If we added 38 years, that gets us to 1973. If you were 22 years, that would take us to 1975.

That sounds right. I retired when I was 60 years old. I wasn't quite old enough for Social Security. I took early retirement.

What did you do with the phone company?

I was a night operator.

So you were actually at the switchboard? You had to know which plug to plug into what?

Yes, this was first in Fontanelle? I worked the night shift for about 8 months and then I went to day shift. I did the same thing as a daytime operator. Then I went into the office. I wrote the work orders, took the money, made up the reports, took calls when customers needed repairs. When the farmers were making sales, we would open up two lines at one time. That was really something to be able to do that. It really helped the farmers.

Over the course of the 38 years, you saw a lot of advancement in technology.

Oh yes! We had just started going to dial up telephone service. That was when I went to the Greenfield office. It was all the same company.

What do you think of all of things we can do with telephones now? (Showing her a cell phone).

It's amazing!

You're probably not afraid of technology, are you?

I saw a lot of changes in my life.

You were married and had how many children?

We had two children. We lost one child with my pregnancy. Our two daughters are Mardelle and Marlene. Marlene lives up by Casey. Mardelle lives in Bridgewater.

They both live close.

Yes they do and I'm thankful for that.

You were a member of the congregational church in Fontanelle?

It was called the United Church of Christ. This is my certificate of church membership. April 1, 1945. It was called the congregational church. The oldest church in Adair County. I was a member when we had to give it up about three years ago. I was baptized in Burlington, Kansas when I was born. I can't find my baptismal certificate. It was a Methodist church. We had school there every Sunday.

So you were a member from 1945 until the congregation dissolved a few years ago? You and your husband and your two daughters went to church there? Did you teach Sunday School?

No, I didn't teach Sunday School. That wasn't my job.

Did you have a job in the church?

Oh yes, I took care of the altar.

You were on the altar guild?

Yes, that is what I did.

You prepared communion?

Yes, definitely. We had a beautiful communion set. I thought of that when we had the church sale. The table was very nice.

And you changed the paraments and washed the fare linen?

Oh yes, it all had to be done. I did it for the whole time I was a member. It was a small church and not many people to change off with.

And now we are able to use the congregation's parament sets for our new altar here.

Yes, it makes me very happy.

How many people would be in church on Sunday?

Not too many. Maybe about 50 people. That would be a large crowd. Usually it was 20 or 30 people. Sometimes a family would bring their relatives who were sitting in church.

The same pastor was there the whole time?

No. Several pastors over the years.

You all supported the pastor?

Yes, he had a parsonage beside the church. I guess the pastor wanted to go on to bigger and better things.

Is the parsonage still there?

I don't think the church owns it any more. It's on the south block close to the church.

The church was important to you?

Yes, very important.

You loved the people?

Yes, the congregation dissolved because most of the people had passed away.

We could not support the building any longer. My church died.

It's been at least three years since you last worshipped there?

Yes.

Did you have any pastoral care from anybody since then?

I had nowhere to go. Nobody could take me with my electric chair. It's too heavy.

For that first year you were on your own?

Yes, I was really floundering.

In May 2003, you came here to the Greenfield Manor.

Right. In the old assisted living wing. Our dining room is in the old assisted living wing.

We came in June 2002 to visit. We fell in love with Greenfield. My wife's family is in Nebraska so she is very happy to be close to her relatives. We accepted the call and moved in July 2002. I was installed on a Sunday afternoon. My first act as the pastor here was the devotion on Wednesday morning. My heart is in this work. I had a very similar devotion in Oklahoma. The pastor still conducts that service. The folks there absolutely love it. The ladies of the congregation here had asked me if I would continue the ministry of the previous pastor. They were explaining to me what the pastor had done previously. He would tape record the message and the ladies would bring it to mini-church. They would play the tape and sing hymns. I told them I did not want to do the devotions the same way. I wanted to be present for all of the devotions. I believe this is an aspect of ministry which is seriously neglected.

It certainly is. If it weren't for you, we would have nobody.

I told them I was going to do the devotion myself and not tape record the message. I had learned some hard lessons when I was a child and when I was a pastor in Texas. The folks in the nursing home in Texas didn't want me to come back.

We certainly want you to come back.

When you came in May 2003, you heard that I had devotions here? Tell me what happened when you first came to the devotions. We did not have the altar yet.

What happened in your life when you first came to the devotions? Specifically with the worship services. Are they helpful to you?

Yes, definitely. I felt like I was floundering

I know it's not like home church. Is there anything I can do to make it more like home church.?

Not anything I can think of. You do a wonderful job.

Do you look forward to the services?

Oh, yes!

Specifically with the sermons, the little messages that I prepare. Are they helpful and meaningful to you? Is there anything I can do to communicate better?

You speak very clearly and distinctly. A couple of the ladies just today told me how well they can hear you even though they are hard of hearing.

I don't need a microphone?

No, you present the message in away that that can be heard and easily understood. The ladies were very complimentary.

Would having the sermons printed out be helpful?

I think I would like that.

Do you have any devotional items that you use now?

No, I don't have anything.

I am a pastor in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. We publish a devotional booklet called “The Portals of Prayer.” Let me bring one to you. We use it in our family devotions.

I would like that very much.

Thank you very much for your time. I thoroughly enjoyed visiting with you. May I pray with you?

Interview Transcript 2 – Maurece

Let me ask you this. I came to the Greenfield Manor April 2003. Mom came in June 2003.

I came from McAllen, Texas. I lived there for 29 years. My husband died three years after we moved to Texas. We moved to McAllen to retire.

You did not have family there?

My son was in the Air Force. We went to his place for a wedding anniversary in 1975. His daughter was in the hospital. My husband had a cousin there.

Your husband was George?

Yes, he had been sick. In 1976, we went to M.D. Anderson hospital in Houston. It didn't prove successful and he died in 1979. And I stayed put in McAllen. I lived on a farm in Adair County. I was born in 1914. I'll be 91 later this year. We have 5 children. I have two daughters left. Three of the children are deceased. My son died and my daughter died of cancer. My other son died in 1960.

So there is a history of a lot of cancer your family.

One daughter lives in Omaha. The other daughter lives in Iowa. Both live close by. Their names are Ann and Margie. They both have children and grandchildren. This is a picture of my family. Everybody who belongs to me is in this picture. They were all here last August. We had dinner here one night – 46 of us, 9 grandchildren, 26 great grandchildren. Quite a bunch. We were married in 1935. I was 21 years old. We were married in Stuart at the Catholic church. The church burned down. They suspected arson. I have one brother. Ten years younger. He lives in Florida. My mother and father were almost 90 when they died. My grandparents came from Ireland. My mother's people came from Ohio. We built a Catholic school in Stuart. I came to Greenfield in 1932 to take typing and shorthand at Greenfield High School. I lived with my uncle here in Greenfield. He was the sheriff.

You took typing and shorthand?

I worked all of the time I was married. I worked in the law office before I knew who George was. I was there until George's sister finished high school. And then I worked in the courthouse. I got a chance to work in Stuart in the insurance office when I was married. Learning how to type was important. I knew my folks could not afford to send me to college. I knew I needed to know how to type. Now I have a computer. But you still have to know how to type.

You have been Catholic your whole life?

My mother was a convert from the Christian church. You know where Geraldine's church is? That was where her parents went to church. Then they moved to Stuart to the Christian church there.

When you and George were married and raised your children, you went to mass every week?

We went to mass Sunday morning. There was no Saturday evening mass like we have now. This is in Greenfield. We moved to Greenfield after we were married. Then we moved to McAllen. We went to church there until we came

here. I could drive to church and go in with my walker. The last time I went, I started to fall. I went to the Mayo clinic. I stayed for 21 days. They told me there wasn't anything they could do for me. They told me to go home and take an aspirin every day. It must have worked. I have never had any pain from the fall. Then I started using my walker. I got my chair about 4 or 5 years ago. That would have been 2000. I would walk out to my car and drive it every day. After I came here I had to leave the car sit out. I didn't have a license for Iowa. So I finally sold it.

I know the priest comes once a month to say mass. And the ladies come every week.

There are five or so residents who are Catholic. There were 13 when I came.

They all died. Sometimes my daughters take me to mass on Saturday night. It takes two and half hours for my daughters to get here.

You came in April 2003? I had been here a little less than a year by that time. You've been faithful with my devotions the whole time I've known you.

I thoroughly enjoy them.

When you came here in 2003, your ability to worship regularly was interrupted. When you came, did somebody tell you that the Lutheran pastor comes every week?

Mildred told me. I knew her before we moved here. Every Sunday morning I listen to a priest on television. We have prayers every day on channel 65. Then we have a little Scripture reading every morning. They have real good minister if I turn it on early. I always watch Billy Graham. He's not been on much anymore. And I have books that I read. I have devotional literature. This is a little booklet that the Catholic church publishes. The church gives me a little booklet. They send me a bulletin. I really enjoy your explanations from the Bible stories.

I want to specifically ask you about the actual homily or sermon that I prepare.

Is there anything I can be doing to make the message better for you?

No. Just keep doing what you're doing.

Do I speak clearly? You can understand the message? I don't talk too fast? You're enjoying them?

I enjoy them very much. Sometimes I don't understand the priest. He reads the same story I hear on TV. I hear a lot of new things from you. I like that. I look forward every Wednesday and Thursday to seeing you.

I look forward to this as much as you do.

I worked in my father-in-law's doing income taxes. The Lutheran people were always very nice. They always extended themselves to other people. Lutherans never let the differences get in the way of their ministry. We were afraid of the Klan. They built a Klan building here in Greenfield. The state commander of the Klan lived here in Greenfield. They hated the Catholics. They never hurt anybody or damaged anything but they were filled with hate speech. They were opposed the Jews, Catholics, and African Americans. If they found out you were Catholic, they would not speak to you. They really talked against the Catholics. We had guns in our basements. But it all blew over. We were afraid to go to the grocery store. My mother had cousins who would not speak to her because she was Catholic.

They were very powerful in the south. I didn't know they were powerful here in Iowa.

My grandfather would talk about the underground railroad that would bring slaves up from the south. The trains came through Iowa. Things are much better now.

You know I'm not a Lutheran.

That's not at all a problem. I'm visiting with people from a variety of church groups. I want to know a little bit about yourself. Tell me some things about you that are very important to you. Has Iowa always been your home?

I was born in Adair County. I've lived in Adair and Madison County. I was born in 1913. I'll be 92 later this year. I was born in the county. I had one sister and three brothers.

You grew up on the farm?

My father was a farmer. My mother died when I was three years old. Relatives helped to take care of us. She died from a kidney infection. She gave birth to another brother and he died a short time later.

You went to country school? How many years did you go?

Through the eighth grade. Then I went to high school here in Greenfield. I graduated in 1931. I still have my class ring. My sister graduated from Greenfield high school also. I still have a few classmates left. When you get past 90 there's not many of you left. My family was not Catholic. I was raised Methodist. Until I got married. Then I became Catholic. I was baptized in the Methodist Church.

Your husband was Howard?

He was Catholic. But I did know him as a child. He went to Orient school. We are married in 1934. I was 21 years old. We have two children, a boy and a girl. My son died in 2000 of cancer. I just have a daughter left. My daughter married a Lutheran and she became Lutheran. My son married a Presbyterian and he became Presbyterian. Isn't that something? Mary Jane lives just west of Fontanelle and goes to the Lutheran church in Fontanelle. She has four children. They are all married. I even have a great-granddaughter. I have a grandson whose daughter just graduated from high school. She's very smart. She was at the top of her class. She is Miss Teenage Iowa. Her name is Ann. She's very pretty. She's going to Harvard next year. I think her talents are what got her through. She's very good on the violin and the harp. I saw her on the video tape. Then she went to Alabama for the national competition. She got down to 5th place among 50 girls. We were very proud of her. She wants to be a doctor. She certainly has it up here. Here is a picture of her. They were in the parade in Fontanelle. That was a long parade. I hope she doesn't change her mind. I hope she becomes a doctor.

How long were you and Howard married?

29 years.

He died young?

No, he was an alcoholic. We had a turbulent marriage. We had a couple who were out best friends. We ran around together. Her husband was killed in car accident. Howard became very interested in her and wanted to marry her. He did not have any grounds to divorce me and I did. I told him if he would marry her, I would give him a divorce.

How did you daughter take this?

Neither of them were that close to their father. His father and his grandfather were alcoholics.

My father was an alcoholic too.

Then you know what its like?

Yes.

It is a hard life.

It destroyed our family. I think Mom's Alzheimer's disease was accelerated with the stress.

My daughter could not take this at all. After we were separated, they did not have anything more to do with him. This happened quite a while now. He died in 1985.

The woman he married had put up with this?

She drank with him. She was an alcoholic also. That's an awful disease. We were poor our whole lives. Because he spent so much on alcohol. When I graduated from high school, I taught school. After I was divorced, I worked over 20 years in the hospital.

Here in Greenfield?

Yes, I worked in the dietary department. To support me and the kids.

Where Ginny Mueller works now?

Yes, she's been there a long time.

After you were divorced and your husband died, you still went to the Catholic church?

I can't go like a used to. My arthritis is bad and I can't go anymore. I always went on Saturday night.

Did you have a job in the congregation?

I helped in the altar and rosary society. But recently, I can't go anymore. I came in April 2002. I've been here over three years now. I had a little house. But it needed a lot of repair. My daughter sold it. Then we heard about the Greenfield Manor. We came and looked at the new apartment. And there were several apartments to choose from. We chose this apartment because it has good view to see everybody coming to work and leave. And everybody coming to visit their family members. We came in April of 2002. Next April it will be 4 years.

What I am interested in at this point of the conversation is to hear about when you and I first met. I first met you in July 2002. You were sitting out at the table. I asked you about having a devotion just here in the assisted living wing? The previous pastor would do a tape recording and the ladies would play the tape.

I knew that pastor. His wife and I were trying to lose weight at the same time.

The priest was coming to minister to the Catholic residents. He would come just one a month. The ladies come every week and they say the Rosary. They come usually on Monday. My daughter goes to the Lutheran church now. Now, there is not very much difference between the churches. We all want to go to the same place. When they come each week, you can take communion if you want to. The priest comes with the bread and wine. The ladies just bring the bread. We used to have quite a room full. Now we only have about 6 people who come.

When I came in July 2002, you have been very faithful from day one.

I want to learn all I can. I am interested in what the different churches teach.

Do you enjoy the devotions on Wednesday and Thursday?

I enjoy them very much. We go down real early to make sure I get a seat.

What I want to specifically ask about is the message I try to bring. Is there anything I can be doing to improve about the message? Is there anything I am not doing that I should be doing?

I think you do an excellent job. You have a clear voice. And you don't talk too fast. We all like that very much. And a good strong voice. You don't need a microphone.

I'm glad I don't have to wear a microphone.

I can hear you just fine. And I sit clear in the back.

The Scripture passages and the message I try to bring from that Scripture passage.

Would it be helpful to write the sermon out once and a while?

I think I would like it but maybe only once and awhile. I don't know about everybody else. I didn't think you would interview me because I'm Catholic.

I've really enjoyed this.

I'm going to talk to a variety of folks.

We all want to go to heaven.

Do the devotions help with your faith and your relationship with the Lord?

Yes, definitely.

That was part of the idea of having the altar built to have a focal point. So we could all truly worship together. Thank you very much. I have much to keep my busy. May I pray with you?

Interview Transcript 4 – Gertrude

Are you a native Iowan?

Yes. I've lived several different places. I was born in Union Township. I was born in 1912. I went to Richland school. Then we moved over to Grand River Township. I graduated from the eighth grade in 1926. I had to walk a quarter of a mile to catch the bus. Then I went to Zion high school. I graduated in 1930. I had an uncle who wanted to pay my way to AIB (American Institute of Business). I cried all the way to town – to Des Moines. I got homesick and then I came home. And that was the end of that. The teacher wanted to me stick with it. I should have stayed with it but I didn't. I had two brothers that are both younger than me. Both brothers are gone. My youngest brother hitchhiked to California. He got run over by a train. He never came back. He wanted my other brother to come out to California. They were both out there. The said, "go west young man." My oldest brother didn't stay in California. They had two children. And my other brother had two children. My youngest brother was an "ice" man. He hauled and delivered the ice. Every place he went, they gave him a glass of beer. Then he became an alcoholic. He wanted to drive home but his wife got on to him and he took her home. He dropped off his wife and then he turned around and left again. I thought that was a terrible way to treat her. She was a very nice woman and didn't deserve that. She died last year. My other sister-in-law just moved into a nursing home. Her daughter went to Oregon and she moved up there so her daughter could to take care of her. There aren't many left in my family.

You were married?

My husband was Orlie. We went together for about four years. He had a team of horses and he sold one of them to buy a cook stove. We were married in 1934.

You were 22 years old?

The next year we had the chinch bugs.

Yes, I know about chinch bugs.

We lived in Zion out past Orient. We moved to Grand River Township in 1943.

You farmed all of those years?

My husband got his leg taken off in a combine when he was 29 years. It was a horrible accident. We had two kids. Now we have three. Wendell, Cliff, and Bruce.

Three sons?

Yes. Orlie did fine with an artificial leg. We went to Omaha for his wooden leg. He had his leg all beat up from the gear shift of on the tractor. When he got his artificial leg, he would hobble around. The boys helped their Dad.

As you were growing up were you baptized?

My parents didn't go to church. My grandparents would go to church in Hebron. I would walk up to the corner and ride with my grandparents. These were my maternal grandparents. It wasn't important to my mother.

But, it was okay with your parents for you to go to church?

Oh, yes. They didn't mind.

Which church did you and your grandparents go to?

The Methodist Church in Hebron.

Is it still an active congregation?

Struggling but still there.

You were baptized there?

I was 14 or 15 years old. My mother was baptized in a pond. I asked her one day how long she and Dad went to church? She said three months and that was it. My father drank. My husband never did. He never cared for it. The Methodist Church didn't believe in drinking. That's probably why my parents didn't go.

As far as your father and brother, was drinking a prevalent problem while you were growing up?

Yes, it was. Every time he went to town, he would be drunk when he came home. One day, he packed and said he was gonna leave us. My brother and father got into a scuffle. It didn't mean anything. Dad didn't leave. I know all about drinking.

It's had a profound effect on you.

I hate it. He could not be any better when he was sober. But when he was drunk, he argued with everybody. When we went to town, he would go to the tavern and get drunk. You're terrified in the car. My husband Orlie would go into the beer joints and get my father out. You just can't imagine what those men looked like. It was terrible for my mother.

It devastated my family. Its effects are lifelong. When you would go to the Methodist church, did you enjoy it?

I loved going to church. They had little Bible verse cards for the kids. They were in color. I thought they were so pretty. My Orlie used to go to church when he was a child. But he didn't want to go after we got married. He said he had gone his whole life and he didn't have to go now. After the kids grew up a little we started to go to church again.

Can you remember the service?

We sang. Somebody played the piano. I remember one pastor, Reverend Weed. He would sing also with the woman playing the piano.

Did he wear a robe?

No just a suit. When he would preach, it wasn't too long. I liked to hear his sermons. He had a gentle voice. He was not loud but he was not boring either. He spoke of Jesus loving us and dying for us. We took the Lord's Supper. We had grape juice. I've been a member of that congregation for a long time.

Orlie died when?

He's been gone a long time. He died of lung cancer. He didn't smoke. Then he started to smoke. And then he stopped smoking again. He may have been gone since 1985. I lived alone in Grand River for seven years. But Cliff moved close to me. And then I moved to Greenfield. I lived in an apartment during the winter and then went back out to the farm. The boys don't worry about me while I'm here. This is my second year. I came the last of May or first of June in 2003. I'm going on two years. June 2005 I will finish two years here. I hope I don't spend all my money. It's a rotten way to spend my money.

We spent almost all of Mom's money. This was not at all the way she wanted her money spent.

I had an awful time when I first came. I had tears. You wouldn't hate it so bad if you didn't worry about the money. I had deeded the farm to the boys many years ago so I hope it's safe. I'm ready to go because I'm 92 years old. I'm going to be 93 in September.

What I want to ask you now is about my devotions. You came to my devotions right from the beginning when you first came. It's not the same as church.

It runs a close second.

The altar project was intended to give a little bit of a church setting.

Under the circumstances, the services are very helpful for me. Specifically, I like to hear you preach. Some of the people read something and it doesn't mean a thing. I like it that you talk to us.

Are they helpful? Can you get the point I'm trying to make? Can you follow along?

Yes, definitely! I like to hear your stories about your family.

If there were any suggestions you could offer me, what would they be? So that I could do a better job?

Make sure you speak up. I need a hearing aid. I hate to give a thousand dollars for a hearing aid and then bury it in the ground.

And to speak rather than reading something.

Yes, that is very important.

Is there anything else?

No, I can't think of anything else.

Thank you for visiting with me. May we pray together?

I want you to reminisce about your life.

My parents lived on the farm south of Casey, Iowa. Their names were Charles and Grace Tickner. My mother was a school teacher. She attended at Indianola school at Simpson College. She wanted me to be a teacher also. I went to Simpson College for four years. I was on my last half and I got deathly sick. They called Mom. I was in the infirmary. I was so sick they didn't know what to do with me. They asked them to take me home. The doctor came every day. He didn't know what ailed me. He sent blood to Iowa City. It came out I was very anemic. My father wanted one of his sons to be a doctor so he could order medication. Mom and Dad bought the capsules that would help me. And then I got better. I started high school in Casey. I think I was 18. I rode the horse for two years. Then my dad got a three-seater car. My sister drove and then me and then a neighbor gal. I would meet her at the bridge and we would ride together. When we got to the road another mile there were 3 or 4 boys that would come from the west. The boys were kind of rowdy. One of them wasn't too bad, though. The janitor at the school favored the country kids. He made sure we were all in the school building when the bell rang. They didn't like anybody coming in late. I started high school at 18. The sickness kept me from starting school on time. I was sick before and after I started Simpson College. But I had done enough college to teach.

But you took the medicine and got better?

Yeah. I needed the money and needed to get to teaching. I taught at Casey. It sure was hot during those days. It would be hot until way late before we would go to bed. The owners of the house thought we were doing too much talking. They told us we had to leave. We got another apartment and slept on the floor with a blanket on the ground.

I had 8 brothers and sisters. I was the oldest. My next sister got married and passed away real young. Then there was a bunch of boys who were born in the family. I can't remember their names. E.J. was the youngest. My sister and I were taking schooling. We had to write thirteen tests in two days. Nobody passed. Except I passed in algebra. I had a good algebra teacher in high school. I'm very proud of that and felt sorry for the other kids who flunked. I tried to help them. Then we took the tests again and we all passed. They were needing teachers pretty bad. Then I got a school in Berea, Iowa. My sister and her husband had a store in Berea. But that job got old and then they got into strawberry planting. Then my folks moved. My aunt married a man who thought he knew everything. Every year he raised the rent on my dad. My dad got sick and tired of it. So my dad started to look for work on another farm. They moved to another farm that had a good home and had a wonderful church. They had a wonderful minister. It worked out wonderful. They started to make money. My husband, Alfred, and I went over there every few weeks. I didn't get married until after I was teaching.

I needed to get closer to home. But another guy needed a teacher and asked me to teach in another school. But this school was only two miles away from my folks. I taught at Walnut #4. I got into a snow storm one night. It was so bad and I tried to get home and I almost didn't make it. I got too deep in the snow. Then one day, Alfred, told me he wanted to get married. Teachers aren't supposed to get married. It was several years before that changed.

You mean you could not get married while you were teaching?

Yes, they didn't think that was right. A friend of mine couldn't get married. We never could understand why we couldn't get married. Alfred got land and waited for me through a friend of ours. A man came up from Des Moines. This man wanted Alfred to farm his land. Alfred farmed it. As soon as the landlord found out, Alfred bought the land. That was a good start for us. We had a little money from the farm and I had saved money from teaching. I taught at this school for 4 or 5 years. The director, just as soon as I had a ring, told me I had to leave. I wanted a smaller ring and I got Alfred a ring too. I went to school and the kids came running up to the desk to see the ring. I taught all grades. I had one kid that was smart as the dickens but he was lazy as the dickens. They had to take tests from the county. This kid wouldn't do anything I would tell him. The questions, he learned them all. He was talented. He would go to the library and read stuff and then ask me about it. I would have to go to the library to find out what he was talking about because I wouldn't know. He won the history contest. It was a big thing for him because it came out in the paper. It was a big thing for me too. We raised 5 kids. We had three boys and two girls.

Church was important to your family?

Church was very important. We grew up in the Methodist Church. It was in Casey. They didn't have any church in Walnut. There was a minister there for 7 years. She had hurt her leg in an accident. But then she said she could preach sitting on a chair. She preached that way. She confirmed most of my kids. I had asked Alfred if he would become Methodist. And then Alfred passed away.

When did you come here to the Greenfield Manor?

A couple of years ago. I lived alone in the assisted living residence. They made this rule. I had to be able to dress myself. I could do everything except that. Then Dean and Melody my son and daughter-in-law, they moved me into the nursing home. There was no use making me feel so bad because I couldn't dress myself.

Then I came and started having devotions here.

I had not been able to go to church. I was so happy that you started to come and have church here at the Manor.

I want to ask you specifically about my sermons. Do you enjoy them?

Oh yes, I do! That's very important to me. You use the Bible and you pick out the different people like Paul and the other people like Jesus. And your talk is wonderful. And you speak loud enough. You have a good voice. I don't see how anyone couldn't understand what you are saying. I've never heard a bad word from anybody. Everything I've ever heard has been good.

I'm thrilled. It doesn't do any good if you can't understand me. Would there be anything you would recommend I could do to improve? You being a teacher.

I can't think of a single thing. You always preach from the Bible. You always have a word from one of the church fathers like Luther or somebody else. I'm glad you come. You've had more schooling than the other preachers who come. Some of them aren't very good. They don't know what they are talking about.

Thank you for your time. I thoroughly enjoyed our conversation. May we pray together?

I was born in 1918. I just got through the 8th grade. There were six of us in the family, five girls and a boy. We lived in Prussia township. The same house that our mother was born and raised. They've knocked it down.

Who were your parents?

Bill and Amelia Bittner.

Any relationship to Max Bittner?

His father and my mother were brother and sister. We were a farming family. Our land is still being farmed. It's changed hands a couple of time.

How long was your father a farmer?

My parents moved to town in the 1950's. They died a month apart in 1956. He worked in a locker. Helped with the meat. People would bring in chickens and everything.

Was Bill any relation to Orville?

Orville is my brother. The Weber clan is a big family. My mother was a farmer's wife. That's all she did. She sewed all of our clothes. We had one outfit for warm weather and one for cold. Dad had a smokehouse. We canned everything. He would put the hams in the smokehouse. We lived a short distance to get to school. It was through 8th grade.

That would have been in 1932. You would have been 14 years old.

When I was 16, I started working out for people I started working for the mothers when their babies were born. I started out at \$3.50 a week. Then they would figure your room and board. I got \$6.50 a week to take care of the mothers all night long. You would work all night long. Sometimes the babies were good and I could get some sleep. I would help buy the coal and take some meat out to roast and buy some groceries. We needed the coal to keep warm in the winter. I did that when I was married. I played the church organ for forty years. I never took lessons. Our oldest girl took piano lessons and we would teach the others. The pastor then taught us the timing. Pastor Jakber taught us the timing.

Did your parents pay for her lessons?

Oh yes! They were so proud to be able to do that.

So your parents got six piano players for the price of one.

And we learned how to play with the left hand too. And then choir directors. I could play by ear and by notes. Dad would play the fiddle and we would chord together. And then a man would come and play with us. Three of us took catechism at the same time. Dad said he wasn't going to do that over three years. We were all confirmed together.

The forty years you played the organ.

I started in the 1940's until 1983. I quit in 1983. There were six years I didn't even have a substitute. Even if I had a cold. My husband was Gerald. He was confirmed after we were married. We were married in 1940. My son Gale passed away just before you came. Our two sons are Gary and Gale. He was buried the day before you came to our church. Therald took you my home the

day after. Gerald passed away in 1988. We were married 48 years. Gale passed away from drinking. He never married. He was in debt. He was driving a truck and doing my farming. He got depressed. He was 56 when he died. He is buried here in Greenfield.

Was Gerald from this area?

He was born in Grove. Just up the hill from Jim and Phyllis. We moved to town in 1983. That's where we lived. I was born Missouri Synod Lutheran and I'll die Missouri Synod Lutheran.

You were an organist and a house wife.

And then I worked 11 years in the Wiggs Variety Store. We needed the money. We were really busy during Christmas. Nora Weber worked in the Piper's Store.

There were two stores?

They were both variety stores. We were busy. That was fun. That was in the 1960's. The men folk were trucking. There was nobody there to eat dinner so I decided to do something else. You could get candy, kitchen appliances, and yard goods. Just a variety of things. We didn't have TV's to sell. Just household goods.

You have been at the Manor for a year and half?

February 2004. It will be two years in February. Nancy and Therald had not seen my home yet. They really liked it.

February 2004, I had been here a couple of years already.

We had a pump organ. Everybody was fanning themselves. I broke in four organs. And then I broke in the organ we have now at the new church.

When did you retire?

In 1983. That's when Zelda started playing. I finally quit the weddings. I couldn't play them songs anymore.

I would love to learn to play the organ. And learn to play the piano. I even took some lessons but the lady who was giving me piano lessons died.

The organ is a lot different than the piano.

I would love to do that.

Beth Scheel plays the organ beautifully. I like the bells.

You are in a wonderful situation to still be able to come to church.

My Wednesday morning devotions. Tell me what you think about our devotions. Tell me your own impressions and the impressions of others.

You're the only one they want to listen to. You're different. The other pastors don't do a good job. Some of them people who come never went to church. But they like to hear you. When Pastor D. was here it was on tape. We just got along that way. There would only be about 20 people who came. Now we have about 50. Most of the people who live here come to the devotion.

But concerning the actual sermon and message.

You make points we've never heard before. You're the smartest pastor we've ever had. We love that. You speak well. We can all understand you.

Is there anything I should be doing that I'm not doing?

Not to me. You're doing a great job.

Make sure you speak clearly and speak so you can be hear me?

You sure do that.

There are folks who come to the devotion. Who are over in the full care nursing wing. To look at them, they don't look like they are paying attention. They may look like they are asleep.

But they can hear you. They can still hear. That's why they bring them out to the devotion. They really want to be there. They want to come. They are not forced. That one lady. She's Lutheran from Creston. Nordene. She's Missouri Synod Lutheran. She's awful hard to get next to but she wants to come to the devotions. I'm happy with everything. Don't change anything!

It's creeping up to my birthday again. November 18, 1914. That's when I was born. So I'll be 91 this year. I graduated in 1933. From high school. From Greenfield high school. The one they tore down. It was over where the Pamida is. This is where the old high school was. I was born about a mile past where Harriet Adams used to live. When I was 3 or 4 years old, we move north of Greenfield. When I was married, we moved south of Greenfield. Then we moved into Greenfield. I have never been far from Greenfield.

What was the farthest place you have ever been from Greenfield?

My parents went to Arizona. They lived at Glendale Arizona. My Dad and mother lived there. Charlie and Grace Harris were there names. My last name was Harris. My Dad told me to go to Greenfield in order to go to school. I took the 7th and 8th grade years here in town. Arizona is the farthest I've ever been aware from home.

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

There were six of us and I was the youngest. My oldest brother was 9 years older than I was. I was the baby out of six. We were raised on the farm. Everybody worked on the farm. Back in those days you could go out to these country schools and I taught school for 4 or 5 years. You took normal training in order to teach school.

Velma told me there was a period of time when it was not proper for a teacher to get married.

That's right. I taught two years. That was when Loy and I were going together. He asked the director if we could get married and he said, "Oh no! You can't get married. My husband's name was just plain L-O-Y. I don't know why teachers couldn't get married. It was only a few townships that it was this way. A teacher could not be married. Another couple was married and she taught two miles away from me. You lost your job. Money was short. I was only making \$45 a month. We needed the money. The first year out of high school, I had 27 pupils. Primary through 8th grade. In order to get married, I waited until the end of the year. School was out on Friday and we were married on Saturday. I was 22 years. We were the same age. We were married in 1926.

My and Loy were the same age. He was a few months older than me.

This is fascinating. To be a teacher, you must have been held in very esteem. You had to conduct yourself at a very high standard.

We had two children. My son Dean, he died when he was 62. He was born in 1937. He died in 1999. Yes, that's right. That's when he passed away. We could not get a hold of our own minister. He was five years older than Gary. He had just been accepted on disability. Gary went and asked Pastor Droegemueller because we thought Dean would pass away. Pastor Stone was over at the Methodist church.

You grew up in the Methodist Church?

Loy came from the Methodist Church in Fareview.

You all went to church?

We had Dean baptized in the Fareview church. I don't remember what denomination it was. Loy was a farmer. Loy became an auctioneer. He went up north. We got tired of being short on money. We bought the sale barn in Stuart. The auctions would take place there and we made more money. He bought the barn from somebody. I don't even know his name. I thought we would live in Stuart but we didn't. The directors pulled our name and we got the barn. We gave only \$9,000 for the barn, put up a new chicken house, and put a new foundation under the house. We paid that thing off in nine years. That was during the War time. Loy was deferred because he was a farmer. And I got pregnant then with Gary. He was born in 1942. I can't remember for sure. Isn't that awful? A percentage of our crop went to the war. That all went to paying for the war. Loy sold cattle. But then the price of cattle went up and we didn't get back in.

Gary and Sharon got married what year?

He worked for Pat Patterson when they got married. They lived in the house on the farm that Dean farmed the grounds. Gary was never satisfied. He wanted to be a farmer. Now he wishes he had taken up something else. All three of those Mueller boys. They all got married the same year. Maxine played the organ. They were married in the old church where the Gospel church is now. Gary and Sharon just have Cindy, their daughter.

I'm interested in hearing what you think of our Wednesday morning devotions. You moved here when?

It was after your Mom moved here. She would miss a meal. I would come and tell her that the meal was here and she would get right up and come. It will be three years in 2006. I came on January 1st. The minister gave us certificates for those who have members for 50 years. I got that corn candy from Bingo.

I want to ask you about the Wednesday morning devotion. Do you like the sermon?

The first time I saw you was at Eva's funeral. It was kind of cold that day. I saw you from one of the cars. I will be buried with Loy. That's the way life goes.

Do you enjoy the devotions?

Yes, we look forward to them. Mrs. Jane is very nice. She bought Louse Kreis' house.

When you say you look forward to the devotions, do you think the wonderful group of people come because they want to?

The only thing about me. I can hear it but I can't retain what you say. I read your sermons. But I had two strokes on this side and I can't remember anything. But I also want to come back.

Is there anything I can be doing in the sermon that I am not doing?

I think you do great. I can hear you fine.

The rate of speech is not too fast or too slow?

I never could carry a tune. My boys can't either. But Loy sang good.

You enjoy the hymns?

Oh yes! Barbara Nelson comes once a month and we have a hymn sing.

Does the altar help make the devotion more meaningful?

It makes it seem like you're really in church. It does as far as I'm concerned.
Thank you for your time. I enjoyed our conversation.

Interview Transcript 8 – Carolyn

Tell me a little bit about your life and life history.

I was born in Calhoun County up north on a farm. I was one of two children.

My brother and I. In the neighborhood, there were families of ten children.

What was your brother's name?

Walter. Howrey was the family name.

Your parents were Sydney and Martha.

They were born in the United States. I'm not sure about my mother's folks.

My husband, his parents were both from Germany. My husband was Arthur. I was born in 1914. I'm crawling up to 92.

You went to school in Calhoun County?

I went through all of my grades. Then I went to high school in Manson High School.

Would that have been 1932?

That's right. Class of '32. Got married in 1933. To Arthur.

Arthur Voss. Was he Lutheran?

I wanted to be Lutheran. We went to the Congregational Church. I was baptized in the little country church. My Dad later helped move the church to Manson.

You wanted to become a Lutheran, why?

I was going to this little church. Then it was moved to Manson. I grew up in the Sunday school. They didn't have catechism. We had lessons but it didn't satisfy me. I had a girl friend and she was Lutheran. And she would tell me about it. How she went to catechism. I asked her, "Can I go with you?" And she said, "Yes you can go." I just loved what she was doing. And I yearned to do it. But I didn't say anything to my folks.

Did they know you were doing it?

No they didn't know. At least not that I ever knew. Then in 1933, I married Arthur. He was Lutheran. I was thrilled His father was a very religious man. He done everything for the church. In those days a furnace had to be started. He was deacon. He was everything but the preacher. And he could have done that too. He was so thrilled that we were getting married. The old minister was from Germany. He was hard to understand. But I was confirmed. Arthur's dad was my witness. We went to the church in Manson. This was not Missouri Synod. It was the ELCA. Or whatever they called it back then. I don't think we missed a Sunday. My three children were baptized in Manson.

Who are you three children?

Walter, Arlene, Ruth Jane. They were all three baptized in the Manson church. The two girls were married in that church. Walter married a girl in the Augustana Lutheran Church.

You are definitely interested in the catechism, doctrine, and the church.

We couldn't do anything. We had no money. We gave our last dime to the church and then had to work all week to give another dime to the church. We would borrow money to buy gas in order to go to church. We made it to church.

When did you come to Greenfield?

I came to Greenfield after my husband died in 1987. I came to Greenfield in 1989. They life flighted my husband to Des Moines. While my son was driving from Minnesota, I waited for him and the doctor called and said that Arthur died. When they operated on him that's when he died. He was 78 years old if he could have lived a little while longer. I moved in 1989.

What brought you to Greenfield?

My daughter in Missouri would come and stop here. Then she would have to drive another 100 miles to come to Manson. I thought, maybe I could do something about it.

"What would you think if I moved to Greenfield?"

"Really?"

"I got a notion to. Watch for an apartment for me."

The next time my daughter got the Free Press, there was an apartment. I lived there a year. Then a man said, "I wish your Mom would rent my house." It was just down three blocks from where I lived. I hate to move again.

Jim said, "we'll move you." We went to see the house.

The man said, "I want you to live in my house."

I said, "I get my apartment for \$250 month."

"That will be fine."

I rented a 3 bedroom house in for \$250 a month.

Then I went to the church in Fontanelle. No, I'm not going to Fontanelle. I was right behind the church. I just walked in by myself. It was Pastor D. then. I asked him if I could join. He knew I was a different Lutheran. One Sunday morning he met me in the hall, and he said you come and join us. I was so happy. I didn't have to go to Fontanelle. I like this church the best. Everybody is Missouri Synod Lutheran except Ruth. She isn't happy there. She doesn't like it. She has the minister on her side. I hope they don't but they might even split. That ain't good. But I'm happy where I am. I've got a nice minister he's got a good voice. I'm very happy.

I've been told that before. So you can hear?

Yes. When you came the first time, I could hear you fine.

I always had a good voice. My mother would scold me because I'm too loud. So I've learned to whisper a lot.

You moved here in the Greenfield Manor.

It was a year in May. I was in the nursing home. Then I could take care of myself. We'll put me in the assisted living. In the old part. I got a nice apartment. It had no bedroom. My kids didn't like that. They put my name in for this. So I got this one. I like this apartment just fine. I just had to walk down the hall.

The devotion here on Wednesday morning. Do you enjoy the Wednesday morning devotion?

Very much!

Is there is anything specific?

I can hear you. You don't talk too fast or too slow. And if you're too loud, I can turn you down.

We have a good group that comes ever week.

Yes, we sure do. They come because they want to.

The content of my preaching. Are you challenged by this?

You have explained things I never knew. Your sermon on the office of the keys. I never understood what they were. I was so happy. I felt like I had heard something very important. You are much smarter than all of the other pastors here.

Does the altar help? Rather than just the bare room. The portrait of Christ and the cross?

The picture of Christ is beautiful. I don't think women should be pastors.

Preaching is men's work. It was not hard for me to move. I made up my mind that's what I wanted and that's what I did. It was easier to get to me for my kids. They go to a big Lutheran Church. They just keep building on and building on.

I did my vicarage in a big congregation. I have done all of my ministry in small congregations.

People today don't take church as seriously as they used to.

Thank you. I thoroughly enjoyed our conversation. Let us pray together.

Lloyd and I are one of three couples who live here at the Manor.

Where were you born?

In Adair County. I was born in 1913. I'm 92 years old. Lloyd was born in 1911. He will be 95. We have lived here in Adair County our whole lives. We lived in Arbor Hill. There used to be a little grocery store where my folks traded for our food. It was 14 miles east of Greenfield. I have one brother and two sisters. They are all deceased.

What were you parents' names?

John and Rosa Harsch. My mother's name was Schnoor. Isn't that a funny name? Very German. My father spoke high German and my mother spoke low German. Lloyd's father, Pearl, and his mother was Goldie Harris. Zelpha's father and Lloyd's father were brothers. Where do you suppose they got those names? I haven't heard Pearl for a man's name before. Goldie was also a very unusual name.

It sounds like a more contemporary name.

Lloyd's mother died on her 80th birthday. And we thought that was old! And here we are in our ninety's. Isn't that something? I'm ready to die. People are living longer. I'm not a depressed person. I'm very much ready to be with the Lord. I'm not afraid. I changed religion. I was in love. I would have swam the ocean for Lloyd. So I changed my religion for him. I changed from Lutheran to Methodist. I tried to be very open about my religion. I was taught the basics of the Lutheran faith. I know the fundamentals of the Lutheran religion. I think I told you that my folks drove a wagon from Arbor Hill to Casey to go to church. We went probably twice a year. Dad and Mom put the chairs in the wagon and we rode in the wagon to church in Casey. We were poor, poor, poor.

You were a farming family?

Yes. My father took the goods to the store.

When did you and Lloyd meet?

That is kind of a funny story. He and a neighbor boy ran around together. His name was Dutch. One day Dutch said it would sure be nice if Lloyd could have a girl friend. Dutch already had a girl friend who was a friend of mine. That's the way it started. We were married in 1930. I was 17 when we got married. That would be 1930. That's when we got married. We went out in 1928 to a house dance. I was probably 15. We went to a house dance. It was dark. I believe the sky was blacker than it is now. We really couldn't see each other. Lloyd said he never saw me in the light. I had no idea who my blind date was going to be. I had to be home at 10:30. That was a house dance. It wasn't any bigger than that kitchen floor.

Was it love at first sight?

It was for him but not for me. He wanted to come back to see me the next day. He wanted to take a good look at me. I told him not to come the next day that my parents would not approve. He came the next day anyway. I think he liked what he saw. That was the beginning of it.

You got married when you were 17 and Lloyd was 20 years old?

Yes, but we had neighbors who said that the marriage will never last. "They are too young and they are not dried behind the ears."

You sure showed them.

People got married younger then. We would say today that this would be too young for people to get married. I had only two years of high school. My father had a bone disease and I had to take care of him. So I had to quit school and take care of Dad. His leg was unbearable to look at. It would fester up and the bone would come out. Then he got it in the arm. He was in Lutheran Hospital in Des Moines for three months. We lost the farm and I had to quit high school. I didn't get to graduate. After I got married, I thought I would go back to school but I never did. We were so poor, I didn't get to go back to school. We got married and there was \$75 between us. But you know being poor is not a sin. I think it tests you.

What did Lloyd do. Was he a farmer also?

He had to stay home. He never got to go high school. His mother was sick a lot of the time. He had to wash the separator. And he had to do all of the cooking. He was the oldest so he had to do all of the cooking. There were 54 discs on the separator. We farmed in Adair County. We farmed in Prussia township. Lloyd never got papers to go to the war. His youngest brother had to go to war. He went overseas. His other brother wasn't in the service either. We had one daughter – Norma Louise. She lives in Indianola now. They moved about three months ago. Their daughter lives there also so they can be close to her.

You became Methodist for Lloyd?

We went to church in Greenfield. We came to Greenfield. Rev. Lester was the pastor then. The church was over by where the post office is today.

You went to church every Sunday?

No we could only come to church maybe once per month. And our offering was only 25 cents. That was about it. We were ashamed of our offering. That we could not give anymore. We didn't have 25 cents. That sounds far fetched, doesn't it?

When did you move to Greenfield?

We retired from the farm. We lived in Grand River. We farmed in Grove also. We farmed all of our lives. I cooked at the high school the last few years and Lloyd was a custodian. The school building was where the grocery store is now. I cooked up here at the new school now. We had a double wide. That's where we cooked. We peeled our own potatoes and mashed our own potatoes. We carried them big bags and prepared for 175 people. We did not open up a can. We made the rolls and the cookies. The noodles too. It was all homemade. It was so good. The students loved it.

When did you move to the assisted living residence?

I was in the nursing home for three months. We did not have any insurance. Assisted living is cheaper than the nursing home. Suzie said I was eligible for assisted living. Lloyd did not come until later. He was so depressed. He did not want to leave the house. He came in December of 2003. I wanted to be together. I made a mistake. He was so depressed. I made a big mistake when we sold our

home. It was a new home and we designed it ourselves. Lloyd was not happy at all. The apartment was so small. If he would have gotten into the car and left, I would not have been surprised. I should have let him keep that home. But I wanted him with me. And I was not able to go back to the home. He was so depressed. I feel sorry that I did that. He's happy now because we have this larger apartment. Our bedrooms and our closets are larger. It is better for him in this larger apartment. But Lloyd has been a very hard worker his whole life. He is a very particular person. Things need to be right. It can get out of hand. When he gets his bed ready, those pillows have to be just right and the sheets have to come down just right. That's important to him. He can't hardly stand this little basket by my chair. But I have all of my goodies in here.

Let's talk about the devotions. The Wednesday devotion every week since you've been here. Are the devotions helpful to you as far as your faith.

Are they ever! Absolutely! They are very meaningful. This is the first time we've been able to go to church every week our whole lives. The Methodist pastor does not come to visit us. Lloyd is going to call him. But we don't see him very often. I'm very truthful. I think Lloyd and I look at it the wrong way. A lot of people don't care for being around old people. That it seems to be what the church has turned to. Taking care of the young people. I'm going to call the pastor and have him bring out for communion but he never came out.

I would not let the pastor off the hook that easily. I believe the young people should receive ministry, yes. But not at the expense of the older people.

I love your sermons. Lloyd says they are from the Bible and that is important to him. Don't change anything in your sermons.

Thank you for our delightful visit. May we pray?

APPENDIX C

CHAPLAINS' SERMON REVIEW AND ANALYSIS DOCUMENTS

First Chaplain⁶⁸

1. In what ways did the use of reminiscing stores serve the homiletical purpose of presenting and proclaiming the Biblical message, especially God's grace and mercy in Jesus' death and resurrection? In what ways did it not do so?
 - The reminiscing tended to overshadow the Biblical message rather than support it.
 - If anyone suffered dementia or other memory loss, pointing to specific dates may not be the best use of reminiscing.
 - You want to proclaim the Gospel and bring this reminiscing back to God.

2. Reminiscing in its simplest understanding is the process of remembering past events and stories in a person's life. In the two sermons delivered to the residents at the Greenfield Manor, when did you hear such reminiscing?
 - The reminiscing was heard all the way through.
 - We felt you need to bring Jesus all the way through also.
 - The mother/watch story was most memorable and offered the greatest potential for homiletical development, such as gifts God has given us, etc.
 - Sermon may have been enriched by recalling Mary as the mother of Jesus or other Biblical stories.

⁶⁸ The first chaplain to review the two sermons in the study described in chapter 4 is a Roman Catholic staff chaplain of a major hospital in Des Moines, Iowa.

3. What did you see going on with the residents as you watched them listening to the sermon?
- The residents seem engaged.
 - You really showed a caring for these residents.
 - The residents seemed to be paying very close attention. They appear to have a great participation in the service.
 - Picking up the papers before the song was finished gave the impression the service was rushed.
 - Perhaps offer the residents some quiet time moment for reminiscing or other quiet times for residents to think about your theme and their own lives.
 - Service was very oral/aural – preaching, music, pastoral prayer. Perhaps supplement by appealing to other senses more visual, such as visual and tactile. Could you have shown photos of children playing with mothers, old newspaper headlines from World War II, etc. Or given them an object that they could hold and touch that may have evoked memories – a cross, a ball, baby clothing, etc., that they could then take home with them. Or asked them in advance to bring an object special to them.
4. As the need for ministering to the spiritual needs of residents in nursing homes increases in the future, in what ways do you think reminiscing (recalling and retelling actual stories from the past of both the residents as well as the preacher) would serve as a helpful method of preaching, particularly within the context of worship in a nursing home?
- To ask them to remember specific dates may not be the best. Perhaps giving the event and asking what they remember of the event, what they were doing, what was special for them in that event – more open ended questions. What was their job? What were they doing then? Think back where you were when Pearl Harbor was bombed?
 - Stimulate their memory with a poster, a movie clip or a person from that history period.
 - Not all of the women present may have been Mom, or had a positive relation with their Mom.
 - Be careful how you ask of the memory so as not to stimulate sadness.

- If they had a miscarriage or no children or not known their own Mom – very wide range of experiences of motherhood – you do not want to create the negative for them.
 - You appeared liked, respected, and able to engage these residents.
5. What other comments – positive or negative – would you offer regarding any other aspect of my preaching?
- The power of God needs more strokes and the family of Christ needs to be more up front and center.
 - Preach the story – one that fosters residents to reminisce about their own experiences – and bring out more clearly the power of God.
 - You need balance – 28 reference to 1, and 30 plus me/my but only 4 to Christ.
 - Look to the power of God, asking how they experienced the Lord at that time in their lives.
 - How their experiences of self fits God's plan for them.
 - Your heart was with the residents. Your relationship was with them. It is personal.

Second Chaplain⁶⁹

1. In what ways did the use of reminiscing stories serve the homiletical purpose of presenting and proclaiming the Biblical message, especially God's grace and mercy in Jesus' death and resurrection? In what ways did it not do so?

The opportunities presented by Rev. Schweitzer to reminisce about World War II allowed residents to remember the sacrifices they and their loved had made for the freedom of the United States and other countries. He pointed out that without those tremendous acts of faith and courage, the subsequent generations would not have the freedoms from oppression that we enjoy today, especially the freedom to worship openly.

Rev. Schweitzer recalled not only the sacrificed at home, but also abroad, by the soldiers and their families, and aptly correlated those sacrificed to those Jesus made especially near the end of his earthly life. Jesus experienced ridicule and rejection from some sectors, suffered mental anguish, physical pain, and death in His ultimate sacrifice for our freedom and salvation.

Rev. Schweitzer read Psalm 33:12 as he tied in giving thanks, having gratitude for the sacrifices made and the faith people had then and now. He shared John 8:31 (freedom chapter) for freedom of sins forgiven and correlated the WW II victory for freedom to have everything we want and the freedom to practice our faith.

2. Reminiscing in its simplest understanding is the process of remembering past events and stories in a person's life. In the two sermons delivered to the residents at the Greenfield Manor, when did you hear such reminiscing?

Rev. Schweitzer began the dialogue with residents and guests by asking about special dates, e.g., May 7, Sept. 2, and Dec. 7. He immediately engaged residents in the non-threatening, bonding discussion in which most residents did not appear to struggle to remember the events nor did some appear to be shamed because they couldn't remember. His approach and delivery methods were inclusive, gentle, and nurturing. By sharing about the acts of faith, courage, and love that people displayed during the war time, Rev. Schweitzer allowed residents to reflect on their lives in the 1940's and validated the sacrifices that they had made. It had probably been many decades since someone had "thanked" them for the sacrificed they had made or validated their honor and self-worth. Rev. Schweitzer tapped into the heart and soul of the residents' patriotism.

⁶⁹ The second chaplain is a woman hospice chaplain who ministers to terminally ill patients in Creston, Iowa.

3. What did you see going on with the residents as you watched them listening to the sermons?

Residents eagerly visited with Rev. Schweitzer prior to the worship service. They heartily sang the opening hymns. When he asked them to recall the specific dates, I noticed them nodding their heads in recognition of VE Day when the Germans surrendered, and VJ Day when Japan surrendered. When Rev. Schweitzer shared the scripture readings, I noticed some people were listening intently while some were poised in thought. I saw one lady in particular staring toward the ceiling as if remembering distinctly where she was, what she heard, and who she saw on the days mentioned. That same lady returned her focus to the scripture reading and actively listened, so I did not interpret her pensive thoughts as dementia-related or catatonic.

Some people nodded their heads affirmatively as he correlated the scriptures passages to the sacrifices of war. This action indicated to me that they were able to remember the “then” and relate it to the sacrifices our Lord made for our salvation.

I saw residents and visitors express their appreciation for the opportunity to worship; and I personally believe this type of service has great benefit as evidenced by the large group of attendees.

4. As the need for ministering to the spiritual needs of residents in nursing homes increases in the future, in what ways do you think reminiscing (recalling and retelling actual stories from the past of both the residents as well as the preacher) would serve as a helpful method of preaching, particularly within the context of worship in a nursing home?

Recalling and retelling stories is a method to honor the lives of people. In nursing homes, residents are often the forgotten population, since the majority of their friends and family have pre-deceased them, and surviving family members do not visit often, if at all. These human beings are seen as having lost their productivity and usefulness in society and are also often viewed as having no worth or value. Reminiscing is a valuable method for them to recall and *reclaim* those parts of their lives that gave them worth, pride, and meaning. For a few moments in time, they are able to feel “alive” again through the opened door to the memories of the past. What an excellent way to minister to their needs through honoring their personhood, validating their worth, and expressing sincere gratitude for the lives they have given us, the next generation!

The generation living in nursing home environments today typically has a very strong Christian belief system. (It will be very interesting to see how strong the faith is among residents 25-35 years from now!) This

generation also has had a tremendous work ethic influenced by the golden rule. Therefore, it is a win-win combination to tie in the stories of the Bible in the preaching in health care environments. We actually “reminisce” when we read or share the stories in the Bible. Thus, doing so with nursing home residents is a natural fit.

5. What other comments – positive or negative – would you offer regarding any other aspect of my preaching?

I was totally impressed with your ease in hospitality and socialization prior to the worship service. I watched you engage the participants in meaningful dialogue in which you shared genuine concerns about their health, family, etc. I have seen some preachers and presenter become occupied with the details (particularly if they were being video-taped) thereby ignoring the needs of the people or ministering to them in any manner. To me, it was apparent this was not just another service or function of your role as a local minister, but rather a calling to acknowledge Christ in each and every one gathering to worship. Your gentle approach displayed unconditional love and you “walked” among them.

The whole service agenda was impressive to me, including the hymns selected. I wondered, however, why hymns such as “Faith of our Fathers,” “American the Beautiful,” “America,” or “Battle Hymn of the Republic” weren’t used to foster the patriotism, freedom, and faith theme?

I mentioned to your wife that it seemed one lady sitting in the front row needed to tilt her head back throughout the service to be able to be attentive as you preached. I wondered if logistically it is possible for you have more space in the front area due to your height, and the fact the people are sitting low in wheel chairs in the front row.

Overall, I left the worship service with a deep sense of gratitude! I am thankful you are open to the calling to minister to an underserved and often forgotten population! I truly appreciate the opportunity to practice my/our faith in inter-denominational and non-denominational ways. I am eternally grateful to the veterans who gave their lives so we could experience freedoms today; and I am reminded of the greatest sacrifice of all – our Lord, Jesus Christ!

Thank you for the honor of witnessing your ministry to our loves ones in nursing homes!

Third Chaplain⁷⁰

1. In what ways did the use or reminiscing stories serve the homiletical purpose of presenting and proclaiming the Biblical message, especially God's grace and mercy in Jesus' death and resurrection! In what ways did it not do so?

The Mother's Day sermon uses reminiscing in order to remind the residents how they first learned of God's love and God's mercy. This sermon guides them to remember that God's grace and mercy comes through Jesus' death and resurrection. The residents were encouraged to remember and use their memory of faith to guide their live.

The sermon that used VE and VJ days as important in their lives of the residents also helps the residents know and remember that God's grace and mercy in Jesus' and resurrection is part of their lives.

I felt that as long as the memories of the residents are mostly intact, these were good sermons. If the memories are not intact, these sermons did not work well.

2. Reminiscing in its simplest understanding is the process of remembering past events and stories in a person's life. In the two sermons delivered to the residents at the Greenfield Manor, when did you hear such reminiscing?

I heard reminiscing in the Mother's Day sermon in how our mothers brought us the faith and how our mothers lead us in all our lives. We remember how our mothers worked to bring us life and faith.

The holiday sermon that remember the end of the war, VE day and VJ day, helped the residents remember important days and the important days in our faith.

3. What did you see going on with the residents as you watched them listening to the sermons?

The video showed some of the residents. I felt that the men especially liked the sermon of the days of the end of the war. These were days the men knew as days coming home in victory. I saw signs in the men of the celebration and victory and knowing also God's victory.

⁷⁰ The third chaplain is a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American who serves the residents in a major independent living, assisted living, and nursing home complex in Des Moines, Iowa.

4. As the need of ministering to the spiritual needs of residents in the nursing home increases in the future, in what ways do you think reminiscing (recalling and retelling actual stories from the past of both the residents as well as the preacher) would serve as a helpful method of preaching, particularly within the context of worship in a nursing home?

I believe recalling and retelling stories helps people relate what has happened in their life and in their faith life. I believe the residents who have had a lot of life experiences can use these experiences to increase their faith with the work of the Holy Spirit.

5. What other comments – positive or negative – would you offer regarding any other aspect of my preaching?

As I talked with Keith, these sermons were good for people whose minds are mostly intact. I think that asking people to remember things if their mind is not intact is a problem. When the speaker shares a memory, it can be useful and good. The memory may help enable (the memory of the resident) but I would not count on use of the memory of the resident. I believe we preach to a spirit, soul, and angel that can use memory but can more effectively use God acts today as well as in memory.

APPENDIX D
EARLY LIFE AND EARLY PASTORAL EXPERIENCE
WITH THE AGED

During the spring and summer of 1971 in Houston, I was involved in a project intending to fulfill a particular requirement for my *Pro Deo et Patria* award. This was the Lutheran “God and Country” medal available to youth participating in Boy and Girl Scouts during this time period. I was thirteen years old. The project involved tape recording the regular Sunday morning sermon during the divine service at St. Andrew Lutheran Church. Later in the week, my mother would then take me to the local nursing home in our neighborhood where I would play the taped sermon to an assembly of residents. The stipulations of this particular requirement were that I was to carry out this task weekly for six months.⁷¹

These assemblies in the nursing home were not formal worship services or devotions as I did not yet have the “gumption” to create a worshipful setting. Rather, I would set up the sound equipment in a large activities room. An announcement would be made over the public address system of my presence and the residents desirous to do so would begin to assemble in the activities room in the nursing home complex. I simply

⁷¹ I was subsequently awarded the *Pro Deo et Patria* emblem in April 1972 under the auspices of the Lutheran Youth Board which was part of the old Lutheran Council, USA (LCUSA). Fulfilling this requirement remains my most vivid memory. It also began within me an interest in serving the aging that has always remained with me. This Major Applied Project is but the most recent manifestation of that interest.

played the tape to allow the residents to listen to the sermon from the previous Sunday's worship service.

Carrying out this project marked the first occasion in my life that I would spend a significant amount of time among elderly people in a long-term care nursing home. I have vague memories of the repugnant odor of urine which seemed to permeate the sterile white hallways of the facility. I also remember being somewhat frightened by the number of wheelchairs and other odd looking prosthetic devices I had previously never seen. I was also apprehensive of being in the company of these "old people" who "acted and spoke so strangely." Initially, I viewed this project with a certain sense of trepidation as something I simply had "to get through" in order to accomplish the final desired objective of receiving the medal emblem.

However, I still vividly recall a comment one of the residents made prior to the beginning of my playing the tape one week. The gentleman said, "I don't like what the Baptist preacher says when he comes. But I do like that Lutheran preacher." I reported this to our pastor, the sainted Rev. Charles Rathgeber. He responded simply by saying, "He's probably not accustomed to hearing the Gospel of salvation in Christ or the grace of God."

The initially "distasteful" project was ultimately accomplished. But I have often thought of those first residents in that nursing home over the course of my life. I never knew any of them by name. I don't recall any of them ever speaking to me. I do remember the thought occurring to me that these residents would be living in the nursing home until they died. They were no longer able to live in their own homes. They were not able to do the things they probably enjoyed doing throughout their lives. They were

not able to see their families as they probably once did. And they were no longer able to go to their own church. The residents had to depend upon pastors or other volunteers to attend to their spiritual care. Hearing the sermon tape may have been one of the only opportunities the residents had to hear the word of God. I even remember asking myself a question which I dared not share with anyone else for fear of some kind of retribution for childish insubordination. “Why didn’t the pastor come to the nursing home himself and preach the sermon in front of the residents?”

I would continue to ponder this matter as I prepared for the ministry. While I was a pre-seminary student in 1983 at Concordia University at Austin, I would on occasion hold a devotion at a local nursing home. This was my first opportunity to lead something which had the appearance of worship. I would make use of the songbooks available in the nursing home, and I would try to prepare a brief message from the Scriptures. I was surprised as to how well my devotions were received by the residents. They truly manifested a genuine interest in being with me during those devotions. While I was in Austin, I was first aware of how important their faith was to these residents. After all, they were nearing the end of their lives. No doubt, they were thinking about their own approaching death and the nearing of eternity. Do spiritual matters pertaining to God, Christ, heaven, and the faith take on a heightened importance with the onset of old age?

I recall as well beginning to become impressed with what these aging residents represented. They have lived for many years. They had lived difficult lives under poor circumstances. They represented an immense wealth of life experience and accumulated wisdom. Matters of the faith *are* very important to them. In fact, all of the truly important aspects of life were important to these people – faith, family, God and country.

They had worked hard all of their lives. They represented a generation of people who possess a maturity that only comes with many years of life. They lived their lives in the nursing home in quiet strength, probably the same way they had lived their entire lives. They had served in the armed forces and had sacrificed for our freedom. I realized I could learn much from these veteran warriors of the cross. While I was at Concordia, Austin, I became aware for the first time that I was genuinely attracted to the idea of serving the aging and elderly. Despite their physical and cognitive limitations, they possessed many personal character traits which I sought to emulate in my own life. I admired the fact they “had their priorities straight.” Proverbs 23:22 took on a more vivid clarity:

“Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old.”⁷²

Upon my arrival at the seminary in the autumn of 1985, I was assigned to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Arnold, Missouri, as my field work congregation. Again, my field work included opportunities for an occasional worship devotion at the local nursing home.

However, it was upon receiving my first call into the parish in Burkburnett, Texas in 1989 that I had the first opportunity to seriously consider my service to the elderly in the local nursing home and to make this an integral part of my ministry.⁷³ The members and elders of the congregation, of course, expected this to be one of my regular

⁷² MacArthur, 901.

⁷³ Burkburnett, Texas in 1989 actually had two nursing homes. However, one nursing home was later forcibly closed due to numerous health and safety violations. It was in this setting that I first became aware of many of the issues that surround the proper, dignified, and respectful care of the aging in long-term care facilities. It was also during the few times I led devotions in this ill-fated facility that I saw examples of what could only be considered as abuse and neglect of many of the residents at the hands of poorly trained and uncaring staff members.

responsibilities. It was to be one of several “additional duties” I would carry out that included serving as a chaplain in the local maximum security state prison (another very interesting aspect of my ministry), serving in the local ministerial association, and other such opportunities for service both in the congregation and in the community.

In this small town and rural setting, responsibility for the spiritual care of the nursing home residents fell primarily to the participating members of the local ministerial association. The pastors of the various participating congregations “rotated” in leading the regular Sunday afternoon worship devotions. I would later come to learn that Sunday afternoon is not a good time to lead a worship service in a nursing home. Residents are usually needing a nap during that time frame.

In this setting, I would also see for the first time the very odd premise that some church congregations and their pastors or pulpit preachers (all believing theirs was the “only true church on earth”) did not see ministering to the elderly residents in the local nursing home as one of their primary responsibilities. This was predicated upon what they believed were theological reasons. Essentially, the argument went along the lines that persons in the advanced years of life either were already in a state of eternal salvation or they were not. This would not change in a person so old and “set in their ways.” Thus ministering to these residents was not good stewardship of time. Rather, the church’s mission was to reach the unbelievers and the young people.

For the Sunday afternoon rotation of worship services, a schedule was made out by the activities director at the nursing home. The local Burkburnett nursing home did not have a separate activities room. The worship services were held in the resident dining room. In the dining room was a bookshelf containing collections of hymnals representing

the various local church denominations. The dominant hymnals were an old edition of the hymnal from the Southern Baptist Convention as well as a set of hymnals from the more ecumenical “contemporary conservative” faction within the Campbellite Church of Christ. By far, most of the residents in the nursing home were either members of one of the local Southern Baptist congregations or one of the two local congregations of the Campbellite Church of Christ.⁷⁴ In order to have a Lutheran presence, I saw to it that the nursing home also had a small number of copies of “The Lutheran Hymnal.” I would later learn this was a mistake.⁷⁵

My first formal attempts at worship devotions consisted of a brief order of service comprised of 1. Invocation, 2. Selection from the hymnal, 3. Reading from the Psalms, 4. Reading from a selected and prepared text, 5. Brief homily, 6. Prayer, 7. Closing hymn, and 8. Benediction. My devotions were not well received. At the time, I insisted I would use only The Lutheran Hymnal, but that I would select hymns that I thought were familiar and easy to sing. Also, since these devotions occurred on Sunday afternoon, frequently I was still wearing my clerical shirt. This was not well received by the residents as I was considered by many of the residents to be some variation of a Roman Catholic priest.

⁷⁴ The two congregations of the Campbellite Church of Christ in Burkburnett typified the current situation within their particular religious association. One of the congregations (the [a]historical faction that saw itself as the only true, visible church in Burkburnett) was among those congregations of whom I mentioned that saw ministry to the residents in the nursing home as being contrary to the Scriptures and a poor stewardship of time. The other congregation in the community saw this as a viable aspect of its ministry and the minister participated in the “round robin” rotation with the other pastors who were active in the local ministerial association.

⁷⁵ The “Bible Belt” in the southern and southwest United States is a very real thing. The residents in the nursing home in Burkburnett did not willingly accept “The Lutheran Hymnal” as several of the residents perceived it be “of the devil” as they thought the Lutheran Church was a cult. It was neither the Baptist nor the Campbellite hymnal. During one of the meetings of the ministerial association, I was advised not to “press” the matter and simply make use of one of the other hymnals that the residents preferred. I refused. This refusal ultimately led to my being asked not to conduct services in the nursing home any further.

My refusal to accept the recommendations to be more accommodative to the residents ultimately led to my being requested by the activities director not to conduct further devotions as they were causing the residents much frustration. In addition, a few of the residents' family members had also lodged complaints against me.

For me, there were important theological implications at stake. Initially, I did not want to use one of the other hymnals simply because I was not familiar with them. Second, I wanted to introduce the residents to some of the beautiful hymns that were in "The Lutheran Hymnal" which so clearly presented the Gospel message. Third, I asked the question; "Why should I have to use the hymnal of one of other churches and they not have to use The Lutheran Hymnal?"

I confess that my own pride got in the way in this situation and ultimately caused my nursing home ministry in Burkburnett to be a failure. But it truly was a "baptism of fire," and I learned many important lessons from my years in Burkburnett, Texas. I served in the congregation and community for eleven years. I had to find some answers as to how I could approach this ministry without sacrificing my Lutheran integrity. I genuinely pondered the question as to why the residents refused to use "The Lutheran Hymnal." What had I done wrong? How could I bring a uniquely Lutheran perspective which I so much wanted the residents to hear? How could I have improved my devotion procedures so as to make them more accessible and inviting to the residents of a nursing home facility? I was drawn back to those months I served the residents in the nursing home in Houston. How could I get the residents to "like what this Lutheran preacher had to say" as the one resident had said so many years earlier in Houston? I was about to

learn even more very important lessons from the residents in an assisted living/nursing home facility in Lawton, Oklahoma.

In May 2000, I accepted a call to be the associate pastor at St. John Lutheran Church in Lawton, Oklahoma. In the neighborhood where my wife and I purchased our home was a recently built long-term care facility. I kept this facility in mind, for it would serve as my next “laboratory” in my ongoing and developing interest in nursing home ministry. As it had been several years since I was dismissed from the nursing home in Burkburnett, I was not aware of the rapid developments that had been occurring in the field of long-term care for the aging. The era of the standard “nursing home” was gone. No longer were facilities for the elderly simply modified “hospitals” offering only one kind of care. Caring for the aging had now become highly specialized, with various levels of care being offered depending on the physical and cognitive abilities of the individual person. The newest aspect of care for the aging is that which is now commonly known as “assisted living.” Knowing these facts would go a long way in helping me to be more successful in this new setting of ministry.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, Ronald J., Barbara Shires Blaisdell, and Scott Black Johnston. *Theology for Preaching Authority Truth and Knowledge of God in a Postmodern Ethos*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- Alzheimer's Association. *Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders, Statistics About Alzheimer's Disease*. www.alz.org.
- Bartow, Charles L. *Effective Speech Communication in Leading Worship*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.
- Bender, David L and Karin Swisher. *The Elderly Opposing Viewpoints*. San. Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1990.
- Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, 2nd edition*. Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1984.
- Bowlby, Carol. *Therapeutic Activities with Person's Disabled with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders*. Gaithersburg, Aspen Publishers, Inc., 1993.
- Boyd, Robert, *World's Bible Handbook*, Iowa Falls: World Publishers, 1991.
- Boyer, Paul S. *The Oxford Companion to United States History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Brinkley, Douglas and Michel Douglas Kaskew. *The World War II Desk Reference*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2004.
- Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver, and Charles Briggs. *Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996.
- Brown, Steve, Haddon Robinson, and William Willimon. *A Voice in the Wilderness, Clear Preaching in a Complicated World*. Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah Books, 1993.
- Brunner, Peter, Bertram M.H. trans. *In the Name of Jesus*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968.

- Butler, Brain N. *Why Survive? Being Old in America*. New York: Harper and Row, 1975.
- Caemmerer, Richard R. *Preaching for the Church*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959.
- Castleman, Michael, Dolores Gallagher-Thompson, and Matthew Nathons. *There's Still a Person in There*. New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 1999.
- Chapell, Bryan. *Using Illustrations to Preach with Power*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2001.
- Childers, Jana. *Performing the Word, Preaching as Theatre*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.
- Christian Ministry Resources. *Faithful Friends Nursing Home Ministry*.
www.faithfulfriends.org.
- Clayton, Jean, *Let There Be Life, An Approach to Worship with Alzheimer's Patients And Their Families*, The Journal of Pastoral Care, Summer 1991.
- Craddock, Fred. B. *Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985.
- Creswell, John W. *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishers, 2003.
- Danker, Frederick William. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Doughty, S.V. *Ministry of Love*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1984.
- Erickson, Erik H. *Identity: Youth in Crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1968.
- Fischer, Kathleen. *Winter Grace, Spirituality and Aging*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998.
- Forde, Gerhard O. *On Being a Theologian of the Cross, Reflecting on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation 1518*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997.
- Galli, Mark and Craig Brian Larson. *Preaching that Connects*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1994.
- Goodrich, Bill and Tom McCormick. *Nursing Home Ministry Where Hidden Treasures Are Found*. Avon Lake, Ohio: God Cares Ministry, 2003.

- Good Samaritan Society, www.good-sam.com.
- Grime, Paul and Dean J. Nadasdy, ed. *Liturgical Preaching*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001.
- Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.
- Hawes, Catherine, Rose, M., Phillips, C. *A National Study of Assisted Living for the Frail Elderly: Results of a National Survey of Facilities*. Washington D.C., Office of Disability, Aging, and Long Term Care Policy, Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services and the Public Policy Institute, Research Group, 2000.
- Henderson, David W. *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth to Our Changing World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.
- Hladick, Patricia. *The Memory Impaired Need Activity*. Geriatric Care Newsletter, July 1988.
- Hoeger, Agnes. *Ever Forward, The Story of Dad Hoeger*. Sioux Falls: The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, 1996.
- Iowa Health Care Association. *Fact Sheet*. www.ihca.org.
- Johnson, Richard P. *Caring for Aging Parents*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995.
- Johnston, Graham. *Preaching to a Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001.
- Kolb, Robert and Timothy J. Wengert, ed. *The Book of Concord The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.
- Knutson, Lois D. *Understanding the Senior Adult, A Tool for Wholistic Ministry*. Herndon, Virg.: Alban Institute, 1999.
- Levin, Jeff. *God, Faith, and Health, Exploring the Spirituality Healing Connection*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. Inc., 2001.
- Lowry, Eugene L. *The Sermon Dancing the Edge of Mystery*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005.

- Maurer, Konrad and Ulrike Maurer, Neil Levi, Trans. *Alzheimer, the Life of a Physician and the Career of a Disease*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.
- Matthews, Alice. *Preaching that Speaks to Women*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.
- MacArthur, John, ed. *The MacArthur Study Bible New King James Version*. Word Bible, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997.
- McNeal, Reggie. *The Present Future Six Tough Questions For The Church*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- Moberg, David O., *Aging and Spirituality, Spiritual Dimensions For Aging Theory, Research, Practice and Policy*. New York: Haworth Pastoral Press, 2001.
- Molica, Robert. *State Assisted Living Policy: 2000*. Portland: National Academy for State Health Policy, 2000.
- Morgan, Richard L. *Remembering Your Story*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2002.
- Mueller, Norbert H. and George Kraus. *Pastoral Theology*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1990.
- National Council for Assisted Living, *Assisted Living: Independence, Choice and Dignity*, www.ncal.org, 2001
- Nestle –Aland Novum Testamentum Graece, 27th edition*. Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993.
- Nouwen, Henri, J.M. *Care and the Elderly*. New York: The Minister and Missionaries Benefit Board of the American Baptist Churches, 19??.
- O'Connor, Thomas St. James. *Ministry Without a Future: A Pastoral Care Approach to Patients with Senile Dementia*. *The Journal of Pastoral Care*, Spring 1992.
- Original Article. *Rediscovery of the Case Described by Alois Alzheimer in 1911, Historical, Histological and Molecular Genetic Analysis*. *Neurogenetics*, vol. 1 no. 1, 1997.
- Plass, Ewald, M. *What Luther Says, A Practical In Home Anthology for the Active Christian*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959.
- Renn, Stephen D. *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005.

- Robinson, Anne, Beth Spencer, and Laurie White. *Understanding Difficult Behaviors*. Ypsilanti, Mich.; Eastern Michigan University, 1989.
- Schmit, Clayton, J. *The Power of Preaching, Prayer, and Ritual in Worship Too Deep For Words, A Theology of Liturgical Expression*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Shenk, David. *The Forgetting Alzheimer's: Portrait of an Epidemic*. New York: Anchor Books, 2002.
- Stagg, Frank. *The Bible Speaks on Aging*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981.
- Strong, James. *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Iowa Falls: World Bible Publishers, 1986.
- Sweet, Leonard. *First Century Passion, For The 21st Century World, Post-Modern Pilgrims*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000.
- Thayer, Joseph. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996.
- The Commission on Worship, The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. *Lutheran Worship Agenda*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984.
- The Lutheran Women's Missionary League. *Women of God: An Assessment of the Spirituality of Women in The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994.
- The National Council on the Aging. *Fact Sheet.*, www.ncoa.org.
- The New King James Version Concordance*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1991.
- The 36-Hour Day, A Family Guide to Caring for Person's With Alzheimer's Disease*. New York: Warner Books, 1981.
- U.S. Administration on Aging. *A Profile of Older Americans 2004*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, www.aoa.gov.
- U.S. Administration on Aging. *Challenges of Global Aging, Fact Sheet*. Washington, D.C.: US Department of Health and Human Services, www.aoa.gov.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Population Projections of the US by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin, 1995-2000*. Current Population Reports, Washington D.C., 2000.

Wentrobe, David.P. *Pastoral Care of Problematic Alzheimer Disease and Dementia Affected Residents in a Long-Term Care Setting*. Binghamton, NY.: Haworth Press, 1999.

Whitney, David. *The American Presidents*. Pleasantville, NY: The Reader's Digest Association, 2001.

Wicclair, Mark R. *Ethics and the Elderly*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Willimon, William H. *Shaped by the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon, Press, 1990.