

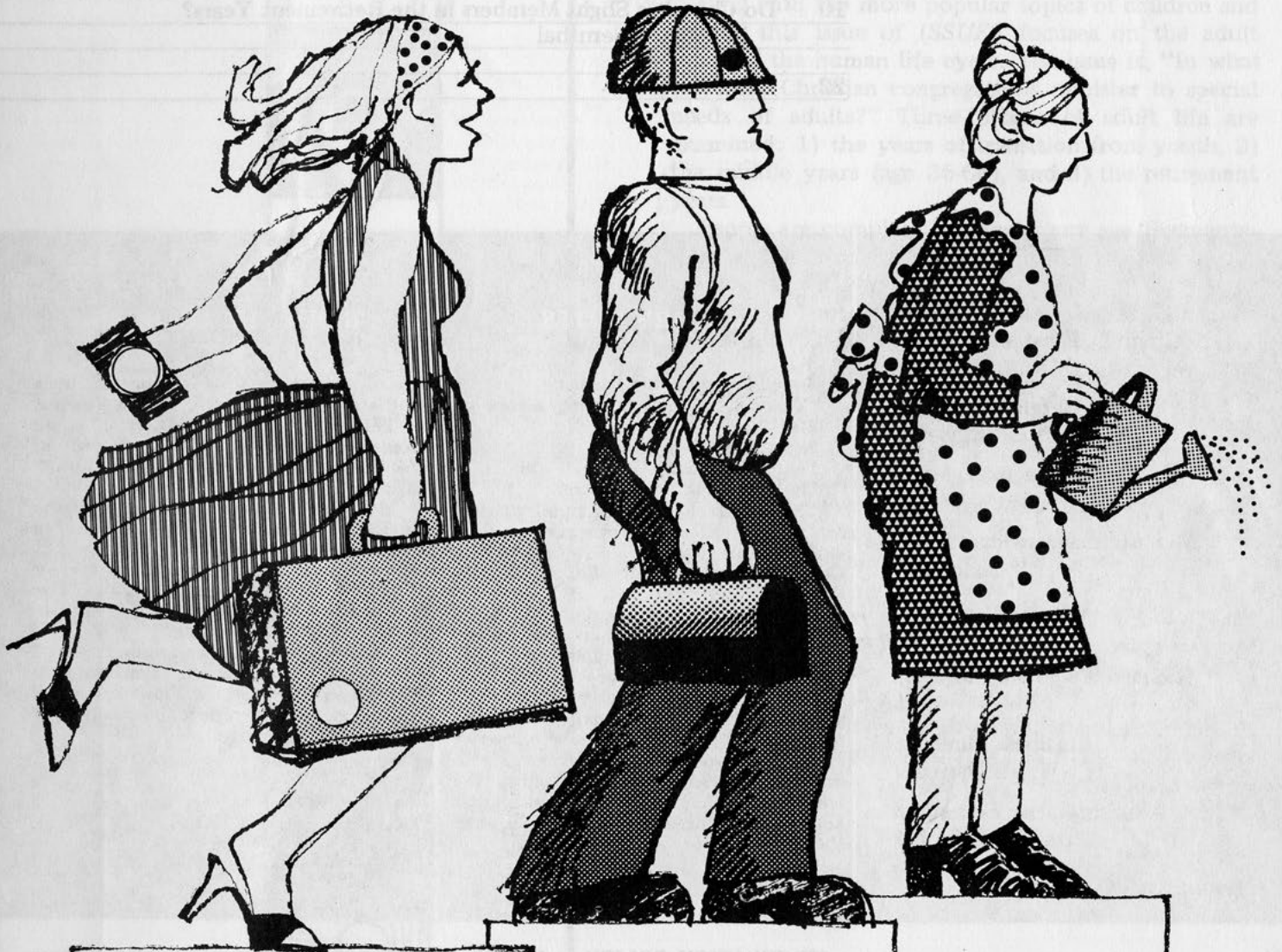
ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Fall, 1980

Vol. 15, No. 1

the Adult Life Cycle:



... ..

CIRCULATION POLICY
... ..

... ..

Fall, 1980
Vol. 15, No. 1

ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Adult Life Cycle:

3	A Fore Word by M. J. Stelmachowicz
4	Editorials
6	The Church and the Transition Years by Wayne L. Duchow
11	Are Churches for People in the Work Cycle? by Martin Haendschke
16	Do Churches Slight Members in the Retirement Years? by August Bernthal
22	Book Reviews

Editor

Glenn C. Einspahr, Ed. D.

Editorial Committee

Marvin Bergman, Ed. D.

Book Reviews

Gilbert Daenzer, M.A.

Associate

M.J. Stelmachowicz, Ph. D.

Associate

Alan Harre, Ph. D.

Editorials

Richard Wiegmann, M.F.A.

Art

Business Manager

W. Th. Janzow

Administrative Secretary

Elizabeth Schmidt

EDITOR'S NOTES

A well known hymn begins:
"Through all the changing scenes of life,
In trouble and in joy,
The praises of my God shall still
My heart and tongue employ."
That stanza is a fitting point of view for *Issues* readers to remember as they explore this number on the theme, Church Programs and the Adult Life Cycle.

There are life cycles other than those considered in the following pages, notably childhood and adolescence. The Editorial Committee chose to focus this issue on the major periods of adult life. It hopes that the authors' analyses of the needs of people in the various phases of adult life will provide congregational leaders with materials for evaluating the adequacy of their ministry to every adult and for planning improved ways to serve them in the future.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. August Bernthal is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, Winter Haven, Florida.

The Rev. Terry K. Dittmer is an executive secretary of the Board of Youth Ministry of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Mr. Wayne Duchow is director of the Lutheran Young Adult-Singles Ministry in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Dr. Martin Haendschke is a professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri and serves as coordinator of specialized testing and counseling.

All other contributors are members of the faculty of Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Nebraska. Views expressed do not necessarily reflect the position of the Concordia faculty.

CIRCULATION POLICY — *ISSUES* . . . in *Christian Education* is published three times a year by the faculty of Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Nebraska 68434. A copy of *ISSUES* is sent free to each church, school, district and synodical office in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Copies are also sent to high schools, colleges, and universities affiliated with the Synod. Individuals wishing personal copies may obtain them as follows: Single copy @ \$1.00 each; Subscription @ \$3.00 per year; 10 or more copies mailed to the same address @ 60¢ per copy.



A FOREWORD

"For Adults Only"

In contrast to many previous published articles dealing with the more popular topics of children and youth, this issue of *ISSUES* focuses on the adult years of the human life cycle. The issue is, "In what ways do Christian congregations minister to special needs of adults?" Three phases of adult life are examined: 1) the years of transition from youth, 2) the middle years (age 35-65), and 3) the retirement years.

People are complete persons at any age. Segmentation of the adult years is merely for the purpose of division and focus on special changing needs. Most readers will not have to be reminded that all human beings have some basic problems and spiritual needs which do not change through the years: the persistent problems of sin and the continuing need for the grace of God in Christ Jesus. The Gospel is equally relevant and efficacious for people of all ages.

Every new day of life is a fresh new gift of God to be used in His service. Christ Jesus came to earth that we might have a more abundant life stretching from here through eternity. All "our times are in His hands." (Ps. 31)

The Scriptures teach us that, "we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore and ten . . . Teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Ps. 90). It is in the spirit of good stewardship of the gift of life itself that we examine the adult days of our years and plan how we can live them out in a God pleasing manner for both our own and our neighbor's welfare.

Michael J. Stelmachowicz

START
HERE

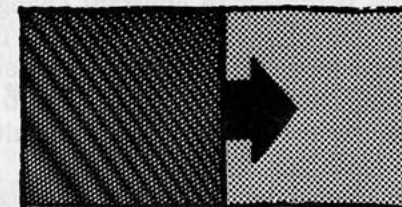


keep
MOVING

5

You're
on your
way.





**rites of passage:
A CASE OF BLURRED VISION**

In American society it could be said there are three basic normative expectations associated with adulthood: to be married, to have children, and to work. All of these expectations can be denoted by another term, rites of passage. A rite of passage can be defined as a formal ceremony marking an important change in the status of a person. We usually associate rites of passage with cultural settings that are less complex in their societal organization. As such, with the unprecedented changes that have occurred to shape what we think about society today, we often think that there is no "formal" change that ushers in adult status. It is more likely the case that in our society the transition to adulthood is just later, more ambiguous, longer, and more complex. We seem to forget about this transitional period, and remember only the late adolescent individual who wrestles free of parental control and dependence, and some 15 years later is found as a householder with a spouse, several children, a mortgage, and community organization membership. Nonetheless, we still rely on the general rites of passage included in the scenario above.

When we take the time to start identifying some of the socio-demographic characteristics of the cohort group of the "baby boom" years, now occupying the young adult status group, a recurring problem surfaces. The seemingly sudden appearance of the single adult, the childless couple, and the ever extending period of studenthood among people in this age group (anywhere from 18 to 29 years of age) have rendered the historic rites of passage of marriage, children, and work inaccurate for describing and assessing the "new" needs of this group.

Under this broad rubric of change, the issue of the place of the young adult in the church cannot be ignored. Many congregations have attempted to create young adult groups, but if the dearth of literature dealing with such groups is any barometer of success, most congregations are less than successful.

There is frequently, no doubt, a feeling of frustration and disappointment on the part of the rest of the congregation because it is often felt that young adult groups or programs simply do not "pay off" in terms of church attendance, giving, evangelism programs, and the like.

My feeling regarding such frustration is that it is particularly during the young adult years that the development of a searching faith occurs. It is a period characterized by independence, questioning, and experimentation that is common to almost all young adults in their transition to adulthood. That many of these activities do not fall under the traditionally expected behaviors of marriage, children, and work does not diminish the need for ministry during these years. On the contrary, the vitality that accrues from a young adult ministry with its special challenges and the strengthening of faith that often results from searching should be expected, affirmed and relished by all members in the congregation. Finally, it is a continuing challenge to the church polity to function not merely as a mirror reflection of the societal expectations regarding rites of passage, but to serve as a clear window through which the Son is seen, not opaquely, but in His full brilliance.

Michael W. Woodburn

**ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS
IN THE MIDDLE YEARS**

Those who have been there and we who are still in the middle of the work cycle certainly ought to be aware of the fact that the most significant aspect of adult socialization is the on-going change in social roles. As we move through adulthood into retirement and eventually old age, we must learn new or amended roles and relinquish old ones. The status of the college professor, for example, not only involves the role of teacher in relation to students, but it also includes a number of other roles related to colleagues, secretaries, and other personnel.

The real issue in coping with the life cycle is the degree to which the individual accepts and performs the multiplicity of roles that accompany the various statuses of adulthood. The housewife who finds herself all alone at the age of 45 to 50 because both children are now married and her husband is either overworked in the world of work or has learned to identify with his job at the expense of his home may find it absolutely necessary to acquire several new roles, one of which may be entering the business world herself.

Too often the formative as well as the transitional years slip by without the person approaching middle age recognizing the need for the acceptance of new and different social roles. In fact, many persons are not really aware that middle age begins at 40 and that aging began at the close of their teens. By the same token, many perceive middle age as a distinctive period in the life cycle. Bernice Neugarten, among others, has often reminded us that middle age is usually perceived as being qualitatively different from other age periods. For the middle aged person, chronological age is no longer the positive marker that it was earlier in life. The ideas of moving ahead and of becoming bigger, more important or even more attractive have seemingly lost much of their flavor. Middle aged people often look at their social positions and roles within different contexts than they did in earlier periods of life.

This doesn't mean, however, that life ends at 40. On the contrary, it can begin anew. What is so essential is that the person often regarded as being in the prime of his/her life recognize the needs for changing social roles and the challenges and opportunities that accompany them.

Significantly, the church, through her various ministries, can offer abundant opportunities for service to those who feel they have reached a plateau in their productivity and feel that they may be starting downhill in health, influence, and perhaps even the vitalizing faith in their Lord that they once perceived and felt. It is in this frame of reference that Martin Haendschke's article, "Are Churches for People in the Work Cycle?" must be viewed.

E. George Becker

**IMAGES OF OLDER PEOPLE:
PLIGHT OR POTENTIAL?**

Aging as a social problem is often discussed in our society today. Descriptive phrases such as "Old Gold," or "Old is not a four-letter word" present images that plead for societal recognition and acceptance. We commonly view this fastest-growing age group (now over 20 million people) over 65 as having major problems of health, finances, housing, as well as a host of other ills, the latest of which is abuse by grown children. The

plight of the elderly, as championed by Claude Pepper or depicted by Robert Butler in *Why Survive: Being Old in America* may give just cause for despair. Societal indifference or neglect is seen as one of the major contributors.

How justifiable are these negative images? To be sure, older people, especially widows who have to cope with rising inflation and fixed incomes, are experiencing financial problems if solely dependent upon social security. However, the majority of older persons over 65 have incomes well above the poverty level.

Housing may be experienced as a problem if older people are living in communities undergoing urban decay. About 95% of the older population live independently in their own or rented homes. Because of fixed incomes, maintenance is a problem for some.

Chronic health problems such as heart, vision, and hearing difficulties or arthritis affect almost all of the older population. However, most older people are not handicapped, nor do they perceive themselves to be in poor health.

Other problems, such as loneliness, do exist, but the majority are not socially isolated, lonely, or bored. When one examines these and other needs, it becomes apparent that most older people are living independently, are relatively healthy, and are managing financially. Their needs are not unlike the rest of society.

Why, then, do we continue to perceive the elderly as social problems? Some sociologists see societal attitudes including Gerontophobia, a hatred of older persons, or Agism, defined as prejudice and discrimination against this age group, as major contributors. Societal myths also abound, such as the inevitability of senility, the loss of intelligence in later life, and the spending of one's last days in a nursing home. The media help to contribute to such negative images by portraying many older people as doddering nuisances who are incapable of intelligent thinking and in constant heed of laxatives, aspirin, or other aids.

Certainly you or I are not caught up in these prejudicial attitudes or believe such myths. We, for example, forthrightly express aloud our age when asked to do so, and we are not concerned about camouflaging the aging process through cosmetic colorings. Nor are we fearful of senility. If we, however, do see these in ourselves, then perhaps our attitudes also

reflect agism or even a denial of our own death.

As Christians we are being renewed in the image of God throughout our entire lifespan. At age 65 we do not suddenly cease being changed into His likeness. Instead, older Christians are filled with potential and life that needs to be tapped by our churches. For example, older people as Christian models can teach us how to adapt to changing roles and life experiences. Older people can teach one how to face death and other problems. The wisdom of older people needs to be shared, as in intergenerational Bible classes that focus on common problems of both young and old.

For a moment, think about the following idea. Many church activities are planned for youth and deal with relationships, interests, projects, and activities which help to maximize their potential. Are we offering to older age groups similar opportunities to maximize their potential other than one or two church organizations that they have been familiar with most of their lives? Older people can minister to and with their congregations in many areas, such as: sharing one's faith in Word and sacraments and life experiences, developing new talents or maintaining already learned skills, and engaging in meaningful activities in the church's mission. Specific activities may include serving as companion aids, organizing a telephone reassurance program that checks daily on the very old, establishing Bible classes in nursing homes, organizing a church food co-op for older people living on fixed incomes, and engaging in handyman projects.

Is your church reflecting many of society's negative images and agism through a benign neglect which results in few or no opportunities for meaningful service and involvement for older people? Or, is your congregation engaged in tapping the potential of all of God's people who are being renewed in His image from birth to death? Congregations especially need to be leaders in involving and serving older people as well as eradicating those negative images which compound older person's problems.

Shirley Bergman

The Church and the

TRANSITION YEARS

Wayne L. Duchow

From birth through maturity and old age, human life is subject to constant change. The church's job is to provide a ministry for all of life, not just particular segments. It must have something to support the child, to excite the youth, to challenge the young adult, fortify the middle adult, and to enrich and sustain life in old age.

In this article we are dealing specifically with the young adult, those in their transition years. These young adults have a right to expect, as do persons in any age group, that their church will support and sustain them in their human and spiritual needs. This right grows out of the needs and nature of every young adult. It is easy to speak of general needs, but only when we begin to get more specific can real ministry begin.

Young adults have four basic needs: 1) relational — most young adults are interested in building relationships with other young adults; 2) social — most of them need a variety of social activities; 3) spiritual — many young adults tend to drift to the church at crisis points, seeking spiritual answers and growth; and 4) educational — most need to be continually open to new ideas, directions, and situations.

In addition to the basic needs, if the parish keeps in mind three basic items that help define the young adult, we can begin to see some areas and patterns

developing for ministry with them. The parish should keep in mind that young adults are: 1) "adult" and want the church and community to respond to them as persons who have adult skills and an adult outlook on life, 2) at a "turning point" in their lives, when they actively assume for the first time major decisions which previously were left to parents, and 3) "people on the move," a movement which takes them in and out of the academic world, from job to job, from parental home and/or community and perhaps back again.

The key to understanding and working with young adults is number three above — "the young adult is a person on the move." For example, if a young adult successfully separates herself from the family either by moving across town or into another city or town, she also separates herself from the family's church going rituals and is more inclined to wait and see about the church. Unless such a young adult has deep Christian convictions, the chances are that she will attend church only rarely and then only to taste a sermon, to come to terms with herself over some vague or serious guilt feeling, or to keep a promise she made to her parents to go to church. This usually means that her weekly routine is established with no time for participation in church activities.

Moreover, single young adults do not fit into the family-centered church. Family-night suppers, educational programs geared to children, and "things we do for couples in our church" have little appeal

for them. Many young adults who move from the parental home soon learn that they can operate without the church. They enjoy the feeling of emancipation that bypassing the church gives them. Churches preparing for a useful ministry among young adults must become aware of this institutional barrier.

The church that is to win the attention of these young adults and minister to them must be their servant. This means that it must not expect many young adults to serve the institution's need for new members, committee workers, and financial contributions. Instead, the church must become aware that young adults have needs of their own which must be served by the church before they are ready to become church members.

An obvious need is the opportunity for meeting and mating with other young men and women through a program that does not seem to be an "opportunity hour." Young adults also need to be challenged intellectually, so that they may continue to develop the curiosity awakened in high school and college. One reason why young adults pass the church by in such great numbers is that they presuppose it will not bring them any challenge to purposeful activity.

One of the most important things, therefore, that a parish can do for its young adults is to design a program that will demonstrate that it really does care about them. This can be done through a number of

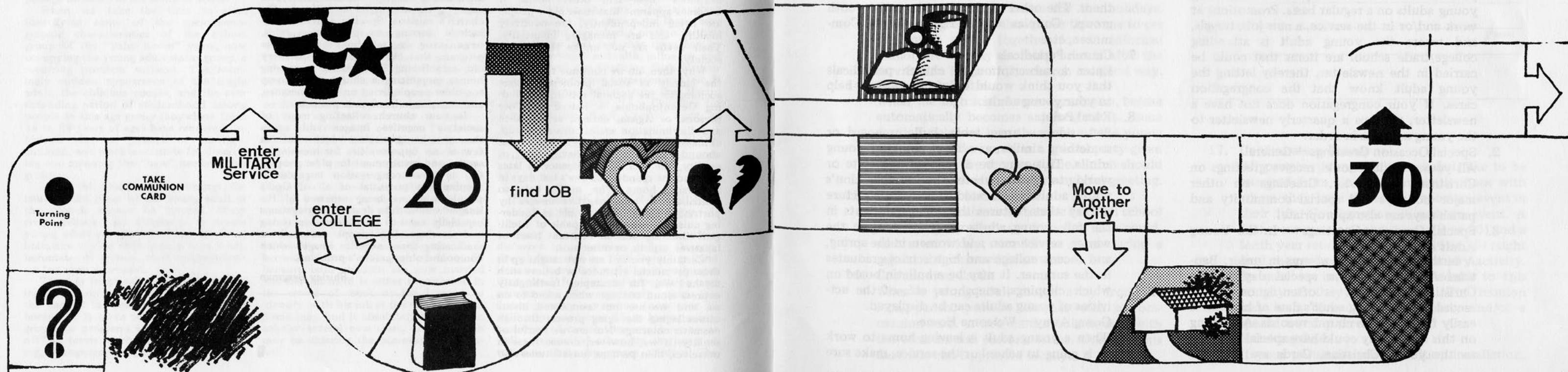
avenues. The parish can and should recruit young adults to be officers and board members.

An ongoing retreating ministry shows that it cares. Retreating can provide a unique opportunity for building relationships, for spiritual growth, and for challenging them intellectually. The retreat setting and/or program can also provide input into vital areas of decision making which the young adult is confronting now.

Some parishes have active groups for their young adults. Here again, because of the fact that many young adults are "on the move," leadership for the young adult group is constantly changing. A successful young adult group must have very flexible leadership. Most successful young adult groups have leaders who serve a maximum of six months.

Care Ministry

If a parish recruits diligently, has an ongoing singles group, and has a retreating ministry it will still only reach a small percentage of its total young adult membership. To supplement its local activities a Care Ministry should be developed. This is a program designed and developed to keep-in-touch with the young adults who are "on the move." It is simply the development of an ongoing program designed to keep-in-touch with *all* the parish's young adults. Because the majority of the parish's young adults are "on the move," it becomes a program designed to reach out to young adults no matter where they are.



In order for a Care Ministry to function the parish must know where its young adults are now living. It can best do this by developing and continually updating a Young Adult Roster. It is a listing of the names, addresses and information about the young adult, such as where the person works, goes to school, etc. The list should include those who graduated from high school this year and for the last seven or eight years.

Care Action Ideas

The following are 21 care action ideas designed to help the parish keep-in-touch with its young adults. Some can be carried out with both the young adults who have moved away as well as those who remain in the community. Some can be used best with those who have moved away. Others can be used best with those who remain. Still others are to be used for the benefit of the entire congregation. Very few parishes could or would want to do everything suggested here. It is important, however, that a Care Ministry Program be developed in each parish.

1. The Congregational Newsletter

The congregational newsletter should be sent to all young adults, including those who live at home with their parents. All of us enjoy seeing our name in print. It would be great if your newsletter could carry items concerning young adults on a regular basis. Promotions at work and/or in the service, a new job, travels, and where the young adult is attending college/trade school are items that could be carried in the newsletter, thereby letting the young adult know that the congregation cares. If your congregation does not have a newsletter, perhaps a quarterly newsletter to the young adults is in order.

2. Special Occasion Greetings — General

All young adults should receive greetings on Christmas and Easter. Greetings on other major holidays and special community and parish days are also appropriate.

3. Special Occasion Greetings — In the Young Adult's Life

A birthday greeting is always in order. Baptism Anniversary is a special day in the Christian's life that is often ignored. The record of the young adult's date of baptism is easily found in the church records. A greeting on this special day could have special meaning to the young Christian. Cards are available

from many Christian publishing houses.

4. Address List and Biographical Items

Once each year, preferably in the fall, provide each young adult with an up-to-date address list of his fellow young adults, including phone number. This list should at least include those confirmed with him/her, a year ahead of him/her, and a year behind him/her. Include a short biographical item about each, such as where he/she is working, stationed, or going to school.

5. Local Newspaper

All of us enjoy seeing our name in print. Newsworthy items include when a YA in the service is promoted or a YA working at home or away gets a new position or new job. Many YA's travel. A story about their travels would be in order. Where the YA is attending college or vocational school is also newsworthy.

For the young adult who is living away from your community, a gift subscription to the home town paper from the church may be a way to keep in touch and show a caring attitude. Some publishers will give you a price break on this type of subscription.

6. Personal Letters

Twice a year the young adult should receive a personal letter from someone in the congregation. The pastor should write one of them. The other could come from the youth group, Couples Club, Young Adult Committee, etc.

7. Church Periodicals

Enter a subscription to church periodicals that you think would be of interest and help to your young adults.

8. Focal Points

Set aside an area, table, bulletin board or something similar, as a focal point for young adults. This may be a map of the state or world to show where the congregation's young adults are located. It may be a picture display that features the college students in the fall, young adults away working in the winter, service men and women in the spring, and recent college and high school graduates in the summer. It may be a bulletin board on which clippings, snapshots, etc. of the activities of young adults can be displayed.

9. Going Away — Welcome Home

When a young adult is leaving home to work or is going to school or the service, make sure

the church takes note of that in the bulletin, newsletter, etc. If appropriate, a going away party would be in order. The same should be noted and done when a young adult moves back to the community.

10. Snapshots — Clippings — Programs

When sending personal letters, the church newsletter or a package, include snapshots, clippings and/or programs from church, school and community events.

11. Sending Packages

In many congregations there has long been a tradition of sending packages to the service men and women. Keep it up. The working young adult in the city as well as those away at college like to receive packages too. Send them as often as your budget and time allows. Try always to include a personal note. Special packaging instructions, labels, and mailing regulations can be obtained from the local Post Office.

12. Greeting of Young Adults

The young adult who continues to live and work or go to school in the community is often forgotten. They also need to know that their church cares for them. Be ready to greet the young adult who comes to church on a regular basis.

13. Holiday Brunch

Many young adults (students and non-students) come home for the holidays. Every congregation should use this time to get its young adults together for an informal session. A Sunday morning brunch after the service at a home or the church is a good way.

14. Graduation Parties

When the high school senior graduates, he/she automatically becomes a young adult. Some sort of welcome into the ranks of the young adult is in order, such as a special party given for them. At the very least, the church should take note of this fact with a special greeting.

15. Baccalaureate Services

A special baccalaureate service for high school and college graduates is in order. This could, and most likely, should be done during a regular church worship service.

16. Communion Cards

When a young adult moves away from the local parish, provide him/her with a communion card. A new card should be sent with the semi-annual pastor's letter. One like this facsimile can be printed locally.

LUTHERAN YOUNG ADULT/SINGLES MINISTRY 1101 University Ave., S.E. Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414	Communion Record	RETURN THIS CARD TO YOUR HOME CONGREGATION FOR RENEWAL
SIGNATURE		PLACE
DATE		

NOTIFY YOUR HOME CONGREGATION OF ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS	Certificate of Membership
Name	_____
Member of	_____
At	_____
Pastor	_____
Signed	_____ (Pastor)
Date	_____

17. Confirmation Reunions

All people, young adults included, like to be reunited from time to time with those with whom they have shared an important event in their life. Confirmation is such an event. A fifth year reunion (about age 19 or 20) and a tenth year reunion (about age 24 or 25) might lend themselves to this care ministry activity. Be sure to invite all young adults to this activity so they all can share. The reunion may be a banquet, brunch, party and/or a special worship service.

18. Reaching Out

If your parish is near a military installation,

trade school or college, a large apartment complex or any other institution in which a large number of young adults live, work, serve or study, you have an excellent opportunity, privilege, and responsibility to reach out to the young adults in your community. Post notices of times of worship. Have the late service on Sunday geared to the young adult. Arrange invitations to homes of members on holidays. In general, let them know that your parish knows they are there and that you care.

19. A Family at Home

Don't forget the adult's parents. At least once a year, contact the parents by letter to let them know what you are doing for their young adult; thank them for their cooperation; urge them to send the local newspaper and ask them to furnish the church with address changes regularly.

20. Referral

Part of caring for young adults who have moved away from your parish is to refer them to a parish or special ministry near where they are presently living. Referral cards for military personnel are available from the Division of Service to Military Personnel — LCUSA. Referral of all other young adults can be done by simply sending their names to the parish nearest to their present address, using the yearbook or annual. Zip codes help. If you can't locate a church or agency near where the young adult lives, send the name to the jurisdictional office.

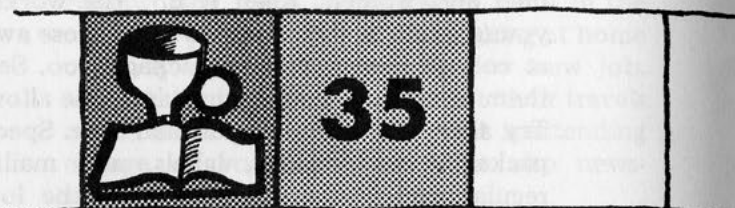
21. Visitation

Where the young adult is attending school the pastor and/or church worker responsible for ministry with young adults should, at least once a year, arrange to visit the students on each campus. A lunch/supper for each 8-10 students and times for individual consultation should be arranged. For local colleges and vocational schools, arrangements to meet the students for lunch is in order. In this way the parish says, "We care."

If you have several young adults working for a major employer in your community or working for different employers but in the same office complex, you might want to meet them where they work, take them to lunch and also offer an opportunity to talk on an individual basis. These actions say again that their church cares about them.

The Young Adult and the Church Today

In conclusion the author would like to share some random thoughts that might help individuals and parishes rethink their ministry with young adults. By emphasizing a Care Ministry I want to indicate strongly that the parish has a responsibility to *all* its young adults, many of whom feel alienated from the church during this period of their lives for any number of reasons. Care action, and care attitudes speak loudly to these persons as they go through these transitional years. They say, "We love you!" and that is what the church is all about.

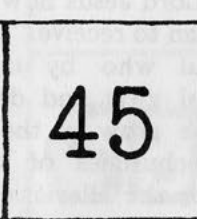
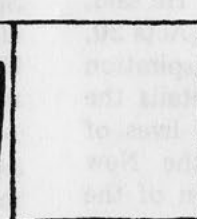


A word to the parish pastor is in order. The young adult group indeed is a hard group with which to work. It doesn't fit very many of the traditional church patterns. Two considerations are important here: 1) the physical presence of young adults at worship services does not necessarily mean that the parish is fulfilling the needs of the age group and 2) those young adults who actively join in parish sponsored programs tend to be the ones who maintain values and perceptions held more by an older generation than by their peers. This does not mean that worship or traditional values are not important. On the contrary, they are extremely important to most young adults. Parishes that have a warm, loving atmosphere at worship and that show a caring attitude toward all young adults will find them involved as Christians in their daily lives. Sermons could and should include references to young adults and their needs. Special Bible classes for young adults are often well attended. Basically what the young adult wants from his/her pastor is someone who knows them and really cares about them.

Perhaps the best answer to ministry with young adults is a strong Care Ministry Program coupled with a loving worship atmosphere in the parish and a program designed to gather the young adults at five or six strategic times throughout the year — a brunch at Thanksgiving, a party at Christmas, another brunch at Easter, a confirmation reunion at the end of the school year and a major outing in the summer.

ii

Are Churches for people in the WORK CYCLE?



Martin Haendschke

The church's ministry to adults age 30-65 is viewed by most people within and without the church as the most meaningful and productive of the congregation's activities. The visible variables between the family and the church seem to indicate that this is the busy time of life when couples are deeply involved in their vocations and professions. They are providing the backbone and support systems for business and industry as well as for church and community programs. The connections between middle class families' needs and the Word and Sacrament ministry of the parish appear obvious and are oftentimes taken for granted. As children are added to the family, grow up and finally leave home, it appears that the church is shaping her programs to

care primarily for the spiritual and social exigencies of the changing needs of growing families. Nor should this seem strange in the Lutheran Church with her commitment to the Confessions, particularly Luther's Large and Small Catechisms with the Table of Duties directions to fathers, mothers and children.

The church has also responded by establishing structures within the local congregations which are to stimulate service and spiritual growth activities for all groups — children and youth, men and women. We hasten to observe early that Christ's Great Commission to His Church on earth establishes the priority for the communion of saints empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel to *every creature*. Since the Church is the only divinely-ordained institution to proclaim to a dying world of sin the precious and soul-saving Gospel centered in Christ Jesus who died and rose again in order to reconcile and redeem fallen mankind, her Word and Sacrament ministry is her absolute imperative.

But the same Scripture inspired by God's Holy Spirit which challenges each generation of believers with this central task of evangelism also recognizes that the saints/sinners who by the power of the Spirit and use of the means of grace endeavor faithfully to carry out this great mission directive must also continue to grow in knowledge, to model the Christian faith in action, to nurture their children and bring them up in the reverence of their Savior, and to serve the less fortunate, impoverished, exploited, needy people of the world, especially those of the household of faith. Already in the early Christian church the complaint of the Greeks to the early church that their widows were being neglected gave rise to the appointment of seven deacons full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom who then ministered lovingly in these matters, so that the apostles could give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word. (Acts 6, 2-4).

In his charge to the elders at Ephesus Paul humbly points them to his unselfish service to his Master and urges them to support the weak and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus how He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20, 32-35). The same St. Paul who by inspiration eloquently describes spiritual gifts and details the fruits of the Spirit as these grow in the lives of Christians also urged the churches of the New Testament to raise funds for the alleviation of the suffering of the believers in Jerusalem who were enduring severe persecution.

In this spirit the church has made provisions in her programs not only for rich worship experiences, but also for continuing Christian education for every age group and for wide-ranging Christian service projects within the local congregation that radiate outward through the community and nation into all the world. In addition, parishes involve the men and women of these middle years in the administrative council which is drawn from the boards of Christian education and social welfare, finance and property, elders and worship. Direct involvement in the ushers group, choir, Sunday school and vacation Bible school teaching staffs also draws heavily on the target group of this essay.

The Problems of Dual Citizenship

After these broad, sweeping, introductory observations it might prove helpful to put these statements in historical perspective. The Church of the New Testament, the Body of Christ in the world, relates to the culture and society in which she finds herself. The environment in which the church func-

tions and serves; the lifestyles, values, mores, attitudes and beliefs which saturate the society in which God's people are born, develop, work and die; the dual citizenship in which Christians serve and establish relationships, the right and left hand of God as Luther puts it (the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of power) — all influence the methodology and the structures whereby the church carries out her blessed and saving tasks. Developmentally, then, the society in which the church finds herself calls for communication skills and personalized ministry, so that, as Paul puts it, the church is all things to all men in order that by all means some may be saved. By the same token it must be recognized that the church is certainly not *of* the world (those life forces which in total rebellion against the God of all grace seek to justify themselves arrogantly as does humanistic philosophy inherent in existential psychology), but it is most certainly *in* the world seeking to rescue and invest with eternal meaning as many enslaved to Satan, his evil spirits and the innate appetites of the flesh as will hear the Gospel and by the power of the Spirit respond to the message of the cross, Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world and His glorious victory over sin, death and Satan by His resurrection from the dead.

Is the Church Complacent?

Yes, there is an immediate application of these explosive, life-changing influences of the Christian church as they are understood and believed in the American society as it exists today. Could it be that congregations today in an increasingly secular and humanistic society are too comfortable and complacent in their performance over against people in the age range of 30-65, simply because they seem to be doing a better job of engaging members of this age group in their activities than with any other age group? It is indeed appropriate for The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to examine critically and evaluate carefully her efforts to involve this work cycle population in order that the church with all her resources may respond sensitively and as effectively as possible to the spiritual and emotional needs of her members in twentieth century America.

The church has indeed challenged the concern and love of her most active segment of membership by launching world-embracing missions like the Lutheran Hour on radio and This is the Life on television, both of which are sustained by direct involvement and sacrificial giving by members of the Lutheran Layman's League. The energies and dedication of the members of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League have enriched and strengthened

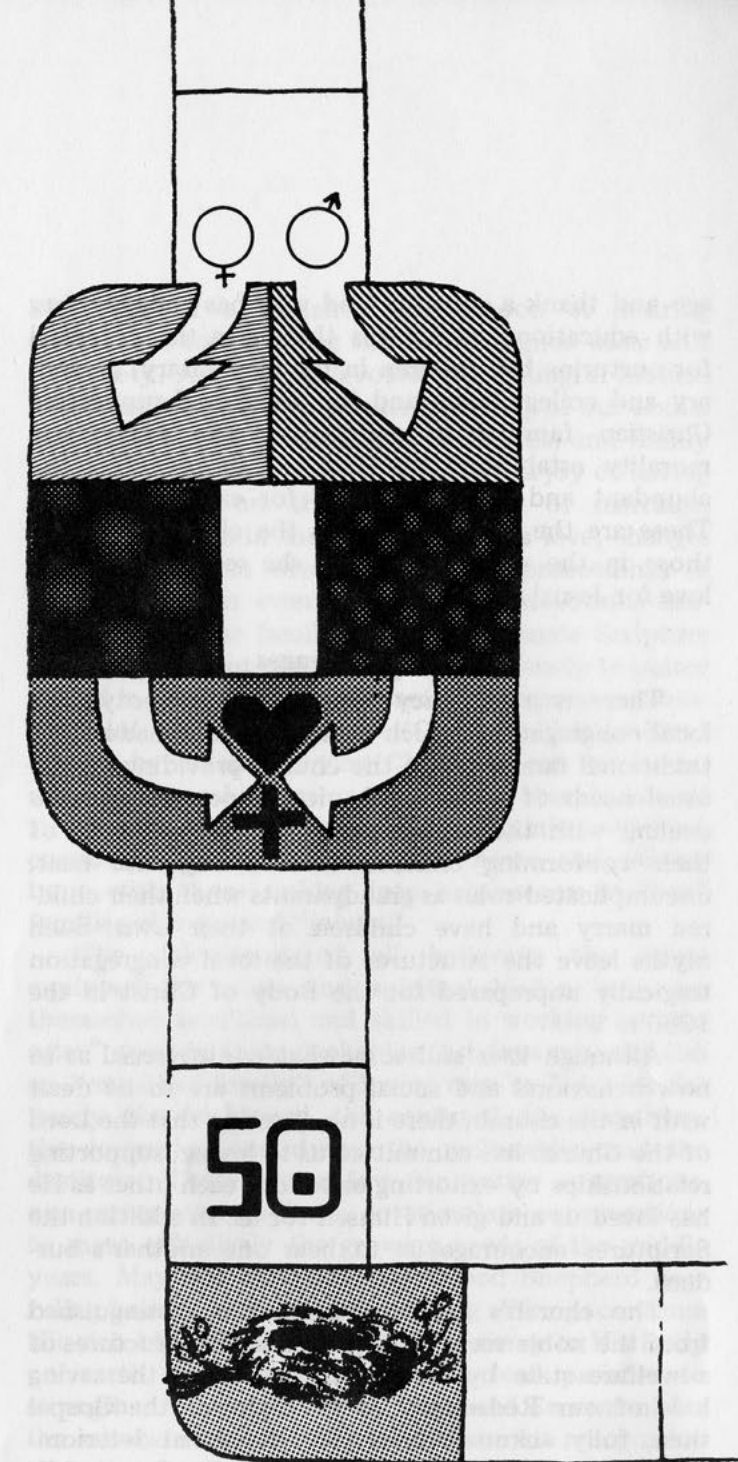
ministries which otherwise would have been neglected.

Having said all this, a feeling hauntingly persists that somehow these massive efforts engage only a fraction of the church's membership and that many within the church and on her periphery are lonely and neglected. As meaningful and impressive as these programs are, enriching the daily and weekly involvement in church programs by men and women age 30-65 who are staffing the committees and boards, conducting Sunday school and Bible classes, attending worship services, and contributing generously to all the causes presented by the church including home and overseas missions, the ongoing expenses within the parish to continue the holy ministry in her midst, the social causes of the handicapped (Bethesda institutes for the deaf, homes for the aged, children's and family services), there remains the residual guilt that somehow continues to press upon the loving conscience of the church that not only are spiritual and emotional needs not being met, but also that they are not even identified. Changes in our world have been so rapid and radical that the church is barely conscious of them.

Is the Church Equipped for Today?

In a society in which moral relativism and situation ethics have been almost universally accepted and in which the massive influence of television and other means of education increasingly reflect moral neutrality and decadence, the church must marshal her Biblical educational resources and assist parents in resisting these flooding influences as they threaten to inundate the precious next generation. No longer are the "band-aid" efforts of the past going to suffice. The good productions of the past such as a Scriptural view of sexuality in the series published by Synod's arm, Concordia Publishing House, edited by Dr. Wilbert Fields; the specific and focused articles and suggestions of the Family Life Education Department of the Board for Parish Education under the leadership of Dr. Oscar Feucht; the independent magazine, *The Christian Parent*, by the sainted Dr. Henry Simon and similar devotional material and Christian fiction are no longer adequate to counter the insidious forces destroying the moral fibre and the absolute values established by our Judeo-Christian commitments.

Now the chips are down and the heat of the battle is upon us. Nothing less will succeed than daily immersion in the faith-strengthening Word, frequent use of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, recurrent reminders of the daily process begun the hour of our Baptism in which our Old Adam together with all sins



and evil lusts by daily contrition and repentance is drowned and dies and the new person in Christ rises to live by the power of God's Holy Spirit. The saint/sinner tension must submit to God's authority and to living in Christ. This Christian struggle is modeled by parents in the home. The Biblical values are transmitted and accepted in childhood years somewhat uncritically. They must be incorporated into adolescent and young adulthood value systems with respect and gratitude if the middle age years are to be a time during which adults can correct and resist the moral confusions and value dilemmas which surround us on every side.

To this end The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod should appreciate and expand her educational herit-

age and thank a gracious God who has endowed her with educational structures that have the potential for nurturing her children in the elementary, secondary and college years and for aiding and supporting Christian families in maintaining the values and morality established by God and in providing the abundant and meaningful life for each generation. These are the familiar answers the church offers to those in the mid-years whom she seeks to serve in love for Jesus' sake.

Special Challenges

There is a tendency to develop a stereotype of local congregations which depicts them as made up of traditional families with the church providing for the usual needs of rather ideal, nice, respectable parents dealing with the simple "growing up" problems of their conforming children and settling into neat, uncomplicated roles as grandparents when their children marry and have children of their own. Such myths leave the structures of the local congregation tragically unprepared for the Body of Christ in the 1980's.

Although it is still somewhat controversial as to how behavioral and social problems are to be dealt with in the church, there is no question that the Lord of the Church has committed us to loving, supporting relationships by exhorting us to love each other as He has loved us and given Himself for us. In addition the Scriptures encourage us to bear one another's burdens.

The church's basic motivation is distinguished from the noble secular charities and the structures of a welfare state by its responsive love to the saving love of our Redeemer! In the light of the Gospel then, fully acknowledging that the social deteriorations of our day are not only due to the world's rejection of the Lordship of Christ and oppositions and temptations of Satan but also to our hardness of heart, we proceed within the church to respond sensitively in varied ways to the degradations of divorce and to the social and physical damage inflicted by dependence and addiction to drugs, including alcoholism and prescription drugs. A desperate need emerges in some of God's people who in mid-years' boredom and disillusionment are dreadfully unhappy in their work and attempt to seek a new career. Certainly the drastic changes in families caused by industrialization, moving from place to place, losing contact with family and old friends, and the dehumanizing tendencies of a depersonalizing society cry for the intervention of a caring community in Christ. With the advances of medical

science extending the span of life and with a social mind-set dictating that people over 65 have peaked in their productivity, are no longer needed and should retire, many suffer a sharp reduction in self-esteem. The church should be addressing itself to the rising concerns of those approaching the seeming termination of their usefulness. The accelerating collapse of families through divorce also threatens the very fabric of society and many families in the church.

What structures and implementations are required in the parish to respond lovingly to these needs? My personal bias (certainly subject to critique and modification) impels me to suggest that we must meet the needs of singles, the divorced, the separated, the widowed and others who remain single by choice or circumstance. The parish must also cope with the problems of the inner city, child and wife abuse, violence that follows in the steps of grinding poverty and despair as well as with a flood of refugees from tyranny in Indonesia and with South Asian victims of attempted genocide and Hispanic victims from Cuba and Puerto Rico, all of whom challenge a compassionate church to respond in love for Christ and fellow man. New and creative modes of ministry must be developed.

Suggestions for Change

Among suggestions for restructuring the church I would include some changes in curricula in the seminaries and colleges of the church. A greater sensitivity to the multiplying needs described above and the learning of skills to deal with them could be required before graduation. The pastoral and teaching ministries would be enriched and better prepared for the needs of people today if we combined Biblical theological training with preparation in the care and counseling skills that pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education and professionals in social work need for serving the handicapped members in the middle years of life.

Collectively, churches can band together to staff counseling centers serving those in the middle years who are oppressed by the loneliness of the loss of a mate. These and other singles can be served by establishing cottage meetings after the style of New Testament. People with common problems in the middle years can discuss Biblically with peers possible solutions for redefining roles (masculine/feminine) and rebuilding relations in the "empty nest" which have been damaged by husband and wife who had differing lifestyles and now are attempting to relate again to each other in a meaningful way. Material must be generated by a caring church for the private

devotions and prayer lives of people in a variety of family situations.

Synod and its respective districts have attempted to keep a loving finger on the rapidly changing pulse of the local parish. Efforts to help parents seeking to communicate meaningfully with their children have included modification of Dr. Thomas Gordon's Parent Effectiveness Training. Even now synodical executives are occupied with packaging Effectiveness Training for Lutherans in a Christ-centered approach and with providing workshops for training leaders in the synodical districts who can bring such skills and insights to local congregations for those parents who feel they can benefit from such experiences. For marriage enrichment, encounter structures are being developed, studied and assessed by Ron and Betty Brusius and shared with districts and local congregations.

Pastors and teachers are bending every effort to resist divorce, reconcile separated spouses, assist those who have experienced the loss and grief of an unsuccessful marriage and console the children enraged and confused by a broken home. In addition to speaking the word of forgiveness in Christ to those repentant Christians who have felt the pain of rejection in divorce, the church has an obligation to accept and assimilate them in her active life.

The catalogue of needs continues to grow! Can the church adapt its structures and methods to develop means whereby the love of Christ and the wisdom of Scriptures may be personally applied to hurting individuals? Do the one — preach the Gospel — but don't neglect the other — the sanctified, caring life lovingly involved wherever crisis needs are in evidence, for indeed the love of Christ constrains us! Creative pastors, reflective synodical and district officials, executives and professionals in auxiliary church-related agencies for children, the handicapped, families and the aging are currently shaping programs and structures to assist the loving church to meet the needs of her members. The faithful proclamation of God's Word and will can be coupled with expressions of love on a personal level by engaging active members in the middle years in buddy systems involving bed-ridden individuals and the home-bound aged. Calling them daily, arranging for their shopping needs and visiting them regularly are vital acts of ministry. Certainly every congregation should have a social welfare committee to serve those who are suffering unexpected tragedy and loss — fire, accidental death, suicide, earthquake, tornado, etc.

Circuits can provide specialists to address groups considering marriage, or embarking on marriage in the

aftermath of a romantic honeymoon or desiring enrichment for guarding this God-designed basic unit of society. An evening devoted to meaningful Biblical views for budgeting (a banker); a study of our sexual and gender roles (a doctor, gynecologist) and family planning which stresses the blessing and joy of having children; one on the legal aspects of marriage, drafting of wills in the light of Christ's love, changes and problems in divorce laws and proceedings (a lawyer); and an evening devoted to devotions centered around the family altar, the dynamic Scripture in interdependent relationships in the family (a pastor skilled in these areas) can be among the presentations.

"Hot-" or help-lines (Contact Teleministry) staffed by trained, loving Christians can be instrumental in reaching areas where the church has no structures, such as those for restraining suicides, encouraging runaways to return home and sharing hope with those sinking into helplessness in "bar" families, discos and "joints."

The priesthood of all believers, the saints equipped for crises and spiritual leaders who are themselves sensitized and skilled in working in "disaster" areas in these darkening last days can establish an "extended family" of loving care in Jesus for the lonely, the frightened, the confused, the despairing, the sorrowing and dying, the guilt-ridden and the destitute. These are a few innovative suggestions, non-prescriptive in form, to stimulate congregations to meet effectively the growing needs of the middle years. May our compassionate Good Shepherd now ruling heaven and earth as our King of kings continue His rich blessing and His abundant mercy to His Body on earth, the Church. May He lead parishes to strengthen their ministry of Word and Sacrament for the salvation of many by a compassionate recognition that the family of God can indeed render loving service and caring concern in an age of intense need!

Brekke, Milo; Strommen, Milton; Williams, Dorothy. *Ten Faces of Ministry*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979.

Clinebell, Howard J., Jr. *Growth Counseling for Mid-Years Couples*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1977.

Groh, John E. and Smith, Robert H. *The Lutheran Church in North American Life*. St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, Inc., 1979.

The Holy Bible.
Kotesby, Ronald. *Psychology from a Christian Perspective*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1980.

Schaller, Lyle E. *Understanding Tomorrow*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1976.

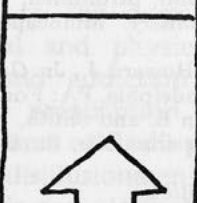
Walsh, Robert H., Editor. *Marriage and Family*. 1980-81, Annual Editions, Sluice Dock, Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc.

62

65



DO
Volunteer
WORK



Show
CONCERN
for other
players

DO CHURCHES SLIGHT MEMBERS in the RETIREMENT YEARS?

August Bernthal

Do churches slight members in the retirement years? That's a searching question. It is answered by all sorts of yes and no responses. For those who conceive of the mission of the church as proclamation only — the sturdy proclamation of Law and Gospel, the answer is often "No." And the "No" is supported by sincere speaking of words directed to the spiritual needs of those in the fall and winter of life. Others respond, "But we don't have any elderly people in our congregation, so the problem does not concern us," or "We have a Senior Citizens Center, and that should be enough."

Not long ago a woman in her mid eighties walked into a pastor's study after a service of installation for a minister of youth. "Pastor," she observed, "when do we oldsters get our turn? We need some attention too!" Between the lines she was saying, "I think my church slights our members in retirement years."

In an age that glorifies youth, we have turned not only to euphemisms for old age like "golden years" or "sunset years" and organized Sunshine Clubs and Golden Age Clubs, but we have permitted ourselves to think of the church and the church's future as being associated primarily with youth and middle age. We have equated old age with loss of productivity or dignity.

The question of whether or not churches slight members in retirement years may approach a fair answer by a series of simple questions:

- What was announced in last Sunday's church bulletin that would be of interest to the

elderly person living alone or in a two person household?

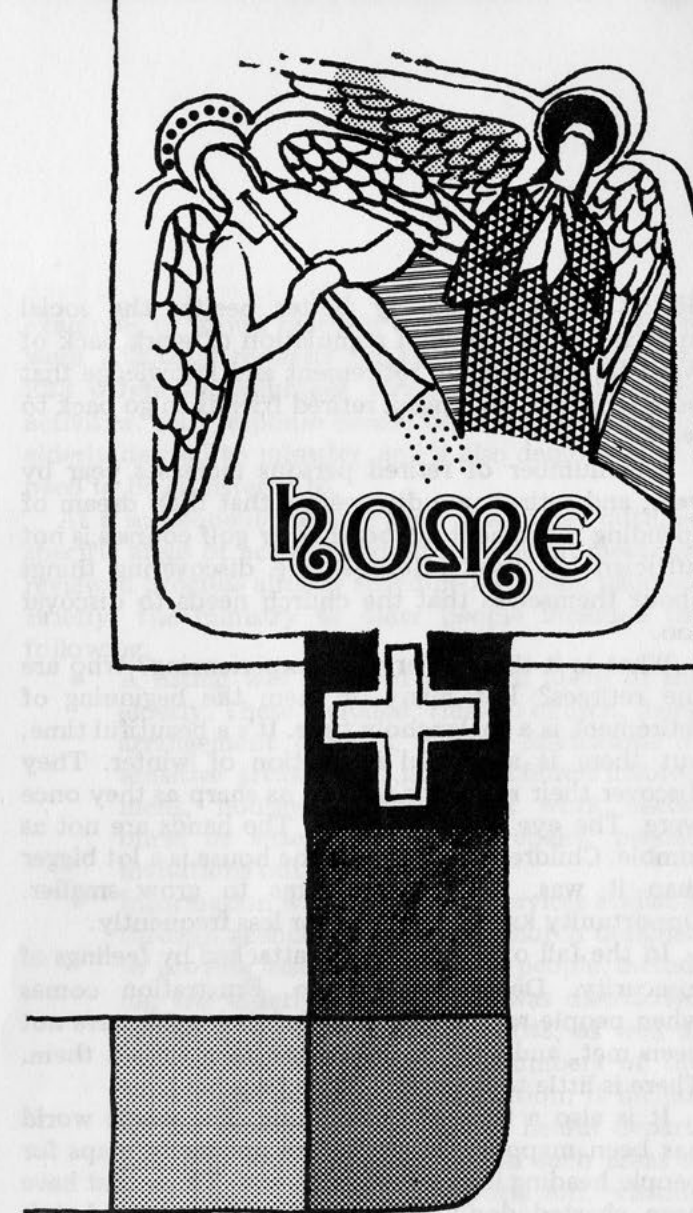
- What parts of the church building or what congregational programs are not accessible to the elderly or handicapped?
- What analysis has been made of the number of senior citizens in the parish?
- What is the potential of the elderly for increased giving or their decreasing ability to volunteer time to the congregation?
- What adjustment in programs and scheduling and worship format has been made for the increasing number of elderly?
- What opportunity for volunteer service has been identified and publicized for persons who have either retired or cut back on employment commitments?
- What functions, activities, or groups meet regularly in the church or in the community with specific intentions to serve the retired?
- What use can be made of the media to proclaim the Gospel to the retired?

The Retirement Scene

Life is not what it used to be. The number of retirees will increase steadily. The changes in our personal lives and society can be lamented, analyzed, disregarded, or used by Christians to relate the unchanging Gospel to lives and a society that are always changing. There are no easy solutions, no quick or universal answers to apply to every congregation. But every facet of ministry must be taken seriously. The challenge is to be creative and relevant as a congregation so that as disciples of Christ we will meet and fulfill the physical, psychological, and spiritual needs of persons of all ages and seasons of life.

Any slighting of retirement people is certainly not intentional. In the hustle and bustle of church life there is often little time for study and reflection, the kind of reflection that can bring about a fresh understanding of retired and older persons.


A century ago only 2½ million persons had reached the age of 60. In 1970, ten percent of the population (20.1 million) was over 65. Today eleven percent (23.7 million) is over 65. By 2000 there will be more than 31 million Americans over 65. The average life span has increased from 47 at the turn of the century to 73 today. Pacemakers, open heart surgery, artificial joints, and all sorts of advanced medical procedures will continue to increase the life expectancy. The death rate among persons over 65 dropped fourteen percent since 1970. At age 65 the average



life expectancy is another fifteen years; at 75 another ten years. So Walter Pitkin's 1932 book, *Life Begins at Forty*, should now have a sequel, *Life Begins at Sixty*.

In recent years more and more persons have taken "early" retirement. In 1970, 745,000 persons retired early (56 percent of all retirees). By 1977 there were 1,064,000 "early" retirees (67 percent of all persons retiring that year).

That trend is changing today. A 1980 study by the Work in America Institute, in Scarsdale, New York, concludes that "the tendency to take advantage of early retirement is changing as more and more elect to keep working late in life." This study, financed by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Commonwealth Fund, included among its conclusions the challenge that "an older person should be offered opportunities as attractive as those offered to any other worker of similar competence, vigor, and ambition." The squeeze of inflation on fixed incomes is the major motivation for staying on the job past



65. It is reinforced by better health, the social interchange and mental stimulation of work, lack of ways to stay busy in retirement and knowledge that boredom has encouraged retired friends to go back to work.

The number of retired persons increases year by year, and retirees are discovering that their dream of spending retirement on beaches or golf courses is not sufficient in itself. Retirees are discovering things about themselves that the church needs to discover too.

What is it these elderly are experiencing? Who are the retirees? For many of them the beginning of retirement is a melancholy time. It's a beautiful time, but there is a wistful intimation of winter. They discover their reactions are not as sharp as they once were. The eye is not as quick. The hands are not as nimble. Children go away and the house is a lot bigger than it was. The world seems to grow smaller. Opportunity knocks on the door less frequently.

In the fall of life people are attacked by feelings of insecurity. Depression sets in. Frustration comes when people realize that some of their goals have not been met, and they feel fate has been against them. There is little to hope for. It can be a flat time.

It is also a time of questioning. The whole world has been mapped, but there are not many maps for people heading into retirement years. Those that have been charted don't often fit. Not knowing what is coming at the close of a productive life, people get cynical. It is easy to believe that life is not so abundant, that one cannot possibly stretch the mind and face new facts, new ideas, new challenges. Life just isn't what it used to be.

The later retirement years bring added concerns. Like the season of winter, the later years are often tough and cold. These years bring greater loneliness. Loneliness comes when close friends and family begin to die, leaving people more alone than ever. Sleepless nights follow sleepless days, and that's misery. There are more extensive illnesses and more time spent in hospitals beds, convalescent homes, and sitting in a room and staring out the window. "Who needs me?" is the question often asked. A suicide note from an elderly man in a rest home read simply, "So tired of buttoning and unbuttoning."

The Myths About the Aged

People in the winter of life are victims of the cruellest myths. There is the myth of senility. Senility does come to a few for one reason or another. However, those who are senile are only a small percentage of the total number of older people. Much

of what we call senility actually may be depression or grief or loneliness or drug tranquilization or lack of a proper diet. Studies show persons do not age at the same rate, that intelligence of most stays constant until age 70, and most older persons have no serious memory defects.

There is the myth that says all elderly are the same. They are not. In a sense all of us have a sameness. We are all aging. We cannot escape it. But who really are the elderly? That depends on a person's perspective. To many the mandatory retirement age of 65, or 60 or now even 55 signals the beginning of old age. To a vigorous 70 year old the 90's may signal old age, while old to a 16 year old may be 40. Each of us has his own perspective. Each of us has known individuals who were young at 85 or old at 31. A 1974 report by pollster Louis Harris indicated society's view of elderly persons has been a "flat and unmitigated libel, a downright lie." His study found major areas of disagreement between those under 65 and those 65 and older concerning the needs and characteristics of older people. In so many areas older people are more positive in their feelings about old age than younger people. He found that most older persons (74 percent) would prefer to spend most of their time, not with older persons, but with persons of all ages.

There is the myth of "few problems" which says that the lives of older people become very simplified and, as a result, there are very few things remaining to generate significant problems for older people. There are typical real problems: loss of friends and family by death, impending death of oneself, economic inflation in connection with a fixed income, the increase in cost of health care, retirement and the possible accompanying feeling of being useless, the high rate of crime against the elderly, decreasing mental and physical abilities, and difficulties with transportation. No wonder elderly people experience stress. Then there's the myth of chronological age. As one chaplain put it, "It's not how old you are, it's how you are old." We incorrectly assume that 80 and 90 year old people are less capable of feeling and responding to life than 70 year olds. One example of differing capabilities is the 60 year old Hawaii resident who completed a thirteen month 3,100 mile cross country run and finished on the steps of the United States Capitol.

Other myths suggest that the elderly are unable or unwilling to continue their careers much past the retirement age (Albert Schweitzer practiced medicine until 90) and that the elderly lose their creativity and artistic ability (Arthur Rubenstein gave recitals at 89). Perhaps as serious as any of the myths is the

assertion that the elderly want to be ministered to and not to minister. They need to utilize their skills in service. They want to. It is debilitating only to receive.

What Can the Church Do?

In the light of all of this congregations might ask, "What can the church do?" An 18 month research project completed in 1978 and called, "Life Enrichment for the Elderly," which was sponsored by Lutheran Brotherhood, produced congregational objectives which were offered as a platform from which to launch out in ministry to and from the retired and elderly. As the church seeks to prevent tarnish in the golden years by utilizing the talent, experience and energy of the retired, it might well endorse these objectives:

To sensitize people of all ages to the concerns of older people

To enhance a sense of self-identity and self-worth in older people

To utilize the resources and skills of older people

To facilitate involvement of the aging in action programs on behalf of older people.

More and more congregations are taking a close look. One congregation in Florida realized in 1979 that its membership included 227 persons 65 years or older, with 52 persons living as shut-ins either at home or in special facilities. It was not feasible financially to provide a staff member who would minister solely to the physical, spiritual, social and emotional needs of the elderly so a "task force" was conceived as a means by which this special ministry could be improved. That was the purpose.

Then there was a plan of action. Stated generally, those working on the project would attempt to determine specific needs and explore opportunities for enriching the lives of parishioners who had attained or were approaching retirement age. Hopefully this would provide a comprehensive base for a more rewarding ministry for approximately five hundred members of the congregation that were 55 or beyond. A second objective was to set in motion a plan that would effectively respond to individual and collective needs on a continuing basis.

A questionnaire entitled, "Enrichment Study," was designed to produce a maximum amount of information in four "needs of the elderly" areas: physical, spiritual, social and emotional.

The results of the survey were considered good. One hundred and thirty-two persons returned completed questionnaires. The confidentiality of individual responses was carefully maintained, but there were

examples of group reaction that were helpful. There were 132 total requests for assistance in contrast to 223 offers to volunteer services in church-related activities. This response clearly demonstrated that the elderly desired to minister, and it also demonstrates a need to be ministered to.

At a subsequent meeting the "task force" outlined specific areas of activity and, in subsequent meetings, reviewed progress already scheduled or being planned. Briefly, the ministry to older people included the following.

- A listing was made of personal needs of the elderly. These included: rides to church, living arrangement changes, desired discussions of sensitive areas, social life and church involvement, housework help, yard work needs, nurse or sitter, handy-man repairs, needed invitations out, group meals.
- Information was gathered on services available through agencies outside the church designed to provide assistance to needy people, including the elderly. A brochure was distributed outlining social security benefits, as well as the address and telephone numbers of the local social security administration. It included the services of the county health department, including eligibility, and such areas as homemaker service, transportation, visiting nurses, home health aids, physical therapy, speech therapy. It included information on Meals on Wheels and legal and financial advice.
- Plans were made for group tours to visit various places of interest.
- Educational, hobby, and craft activities were planned in cooperation with the community college. Courses were offered for the elderly which included: financial and estate planning, art and crafts, sewing, health and exercise, conversational Spanish and German, chorus, creative writing.
- Plans were made to operate an office in the church's facilities each day from 9:00 a.m. to twelve noon, Monday through Friday, to respond to personal needs. Telephone numbers were given to all senior citizens, and they were invited to call when in need of transportation, visits, legal or financial advice, etc.
- Financial seminars offered assistance with wills, trusts, insurance, social security and other financial subjects.
- Lunches and socials were planned on a regular basis to meet the social needs.

How 5-9 Year Olds Can Have Important Bible Themes Reinforced—for as little as \$3.99

With the "go-anywhere" convenience of cassette players, you can now doubly reinforce important Bible themes with 12 new *Arch Book Aloud with Cassette* sets. Children will listen as well as read a beloved *Arch Book*. The professional narration vividly describes—with the aid of sound effects and music—the drama and excitement of Bible times.

Imagine how this exciting presentation will benefit your Sunday School... With the remarkable flexibility of cassette players, you can make favorite *Arch Books* even more enjoyable and instructive—outdoors as well as indoors! Anywhere battery-powered cassette players can go.

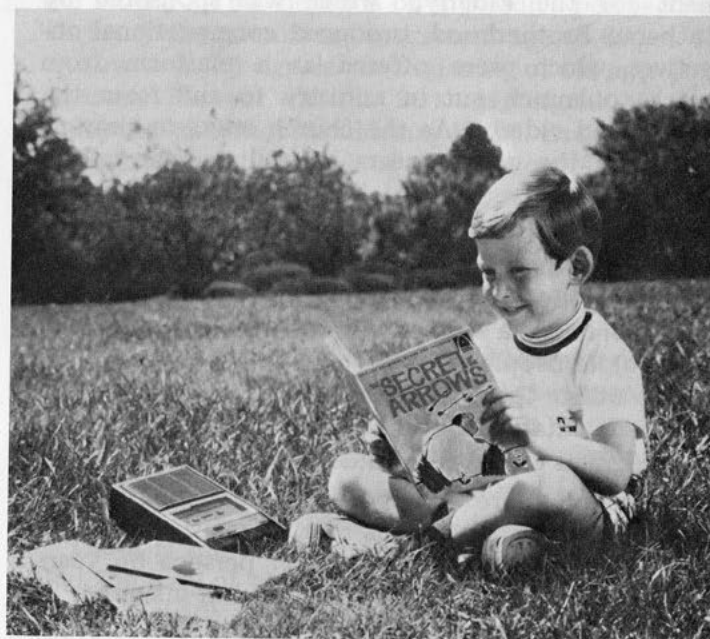
Your 12 new *Arch Book Aloud with Cassette* sets include—

- Two specially selected *Arch Books*, both related in theme: Easter, Christmas, Old Testament, and New Testament.
- One tape cassette with complete narration for both stories. **Includes audible "beeps" so beginning readers know when to turn the page.**

Arch Books Aloud are now as flexible as your cassette player! Order your church's sets today.

For fastest service: order toll free 800-325-3040 8:00-4:30 CST Monday-Friday.

In Missouri order collect 314-664-7000 and ask for Customer Service.



\$3.99 for each set.

Mail your NO-RISK coupon today

Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118

Yes, I want to doubly reinforce important Bible themes for my Sunday school students. Please send me the following **Arch Book Aloud with Cassette** sets at **\$3.99** per set. If after 30 days examination I am not completely satisfied, I may return the set(s) and invoice and owe nothing.

- quantity _____
- **The Baby Born in a Stable**, Christmas; **The Secret Journey**, Mary and Joseph flee to Egypt. (59CZ2105)
 - **Clem the Clumsy Camel**, goes with the Wise Men; **Donkey Daniel in Bethlehem**, Christmas. (59CZ2130)
 - **Kiri and the First Easter**, boy witnesses Holy Week; **The Most Wonderful King**, Lent/Easter. (59CZ2111)
 - **The Story of Noah's Ark**; **The World God Made**, creation. (59CZ2101)
 - **The Princess and the Baby**, Moses; **The Great Escape**, Exodus. (59CZ2103)
 - **The Boy with a Sling**, David; **The Secret of the Arrows**, David and Jonathan. (59CZ2104)
 - **Daniel in the Lions' Den**; **Three Men Who Walked in Fire** (59CZ2116)
 - **The Man Caught by a Fish**; **A Garden and a Promise**, Adam and Eve. (59CZ2125)
 - **The Boy Who Gave His Lunch Away**, feeding the 5,000; **The Fishermen's Surprise**, the great catch. (59CZ2108)
 - **The Little Sleeping Beauty**, Jairus' daughter; **The Lame Man Who Walked Again**. (59CZ2109)
 - **The Good Samaritan**; **Samir's Midnight Friend**, parable of prayer. (59CZ2110)
 - **The House on the Rock**, parable; **The Little Boat That Almost Sank**, quieting the storm. (59CZ2118)

Name _____
 Title _____ Church _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

I enclose \$ _____
 On check or money orders please add the following for postage and handling: Up to \$5.00—60¢; \$5.01 to \$10.00—\$1.20; \$10.01 to \$15.00—\$1.75; \$15.01 and up—\$2.25.
 Bill my Concordia account, No. _____
 A service charge of 50¢ will be added to charge orders of \$5.00 or less. Postage is also added.



CONCORDIA
 Publishing House
 3558 S. Jefferson Ave.,
 St. Louis, MO 63118

- An "adopt a grandparent program" was initiated in which older children and teenagers were assigned a lonely older couple or individual with special needs who would benefit from such a relationship. Systematic visits bring cheer and healthy companionship. The elderly share their memories with them as friends, and children are interested in hearing the stories and seeing the albums and accumulated keepsakes.
- Bible classes were scheduled in homes and at church at times convenient to the retired, and a regular Sunday morning church service broadcast continued.
- A check was made on the sufficiency of ramps and the public address equipment of the church.
- A senior citizens library was established.
- The first-aid equipment was up-dated by a physician, and a lending bank was established for providing wheel chairs, hospital beds, walkers, and other equipment.

A congregation ministering to older people, however, cannot afford to concentrate only on their needs. Retirees have much to give to the congregation and to each other. Stewardship of time and talents means providing opportunities for the stewardship of everyone's time and talents. Christians do not retire from the church and from the faith. Their responsibilities are life-long.

That's true in society too. Older Americans are becoming a strong force in so many areas of life. More and more eligible voters in the United States are over 65. Harris found that 90 percent of retired people say they are looking for work and that 22 percent are volunteers. One study says that the elderly constitute the largest age group of unchurched people in the country. Our churches lose valuable resources when they lose the elderly.

The church needs to challenge older people. If a man says "I work" or if he says "I am retired," he hasn't said very much about himself. The real question is "What are you doing?" The apostles, as they were growing older, would say right away what they were doing — they were spreading good news all around — the good news of God and Jesus Christ. They were caring for people. There came the day when the apostle Paul was not as limber as he once was, but he had a great spirit.

Respondents to the Florida survey indicated a willingness to transport people, send meals, bake cakes, send cards, visit shut-ins, include lonely people in holiday plans, make phone calls, help with repairs

and yard work, serve as temporary homemakers, share skill and talent.

Senior citizens were enlisted for strategic and high positions within the congregation. The board of elders, board of deacons, stewardship committee, creative giving committee, board of ushers, maintenance committee — all received enthusiastic response from those elderly asked to serve. What a critical and challenging ministry! The issue is not primarily money, but concern.

Above all, the church must proclaim a message to the elderly. There are many messages to proclaim. "We never give up," wrote St. Paul (2 Corinthians 4:16). "We do not lose heart, we never collapse. The outward man does indeed suffer wear and tear, but everyday the inward man receives fresh strength. Though our bodies are dying, our inner strength in the Lord is growing everyday." Older people discover that more each day. The winter of life is a great time when it is taken with faith and hope and love. Old age is a gift from God. It is not a calamity.

Our Lord knew all about the aches and pains that come in winter. He knows how it feels when people don't want you around anymore. He knew how it felt to look old even before one's time. Knowing Jesus, Paul, no longer young, could write what so many retirees today can say: "I never give up. What is really happening is that I am getting stronger all the time, inside where it counts." Paul was getting old, but there wasn't any bitterness at all. It wasn't that he was not a realist and tried to cover up the passing years. The winter wind could blow, but he saw the sunshine of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The church needs to tell people how to grow older gracefully, how to grow stronger all the time, inside where it counts, how to use the Word and Sacraments to that end. The only way to grow old gracefully is through the grace of God and Jesus Christ. That's not resignation to the inevitable; it's the acceptance of life as God gives it — and as He will continue to give it with expanding glory and opportunity. When one is in contact with God all the way, one finds the world is never really closing in. It is constantly enlarging with all sorts of opportunities to live the abundant life. The church is challenged to make that abundantly clear to all.

Young Adults

SATURDAY NIGHT SUNDAY MORNING, by Nic. Christoff, New York: Harper and Row, 1978.

Thoughts from a single pastor ministering in a large apartment complex explains that what singles want from church is not "swinging relevance" but pure Gospel in a community that really cares about them.

THE WHOLE PERSONS CATALOG, by Emily Collins, New York: Peebles Press International, Inc., distributed by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979.

An 8½" x 11" catalog full of general and practical information for effective living as a single/young adult person from a secular perspective with extensive bibliographies in many areas.

CONGREGATION YOUNG ADULT KIT, Available from the University Lutheran Center, 1101 University Ave., S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414.

An excellent tool to help congregations keep track of and care for their young adults. Notebook format.

FOR SINGLES ONLY, by Janet Fix, Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revel Co., 1978.

An upbeat, strong, optimistic, literate, positive, Scripture-oriented, passionate guide to singleness for the single adult and those who minister to them.

43 S*A*M*S (SINGLE ADULT MINISTRY SUGGESTIONS), published jointly by the Board of Youth Ministry, Board of Parish Education and Campus Ministry, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. BPE Bulletin #65180.

A collection of practical suggestions aimed at helping congregational boards and organizations address young adult ministry.

MINISTRIES WITH YOUNG ADULTS, Edited by Curtis B. Haney, Published bi-monthly by the Lutheran Church in America, Division for Parish Services.

A newsletter dealing with what's new in exploring and engaging in ministries with young adults.

Terry K. Dittmer

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SINGLES, P.O. Box 11394, Kansas City, MO., 64112. Membership about \$15.00 per year.

Membership entitles you to a subscription to "Single 1," a bi-monthly newsletter covering what's happening in single/young adult ministry, news, views and reviews, a membership packet of single/young adult ministry aids, and a subscription to *Today's Single*, a tabloid for single young adults.

SINGLE ON SUNDAY: A MANUAL FOR SUCCESSFUL SINGLE ADULT MINISTRIES, by Bobbie Reed, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979.

An excellent resource that suggests tools for helping churches respond to the growing numbers of single adults. A very practical offering of ideas for spiritual growth, emotional support, social interaction and educational development.

MINISTERING TO SINGLE ADULTS, by Gene Van Note, Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, Nazarene Publishing House.

A basic handbook for single adult ministry, covered Biblically and competently. It deals with the myths of singleness, singles and Christians life, characteristics of single adults, divorce and remarriage and suggestions on proceeding with such a ministry in the local parish.

JESUS WAS A SINGLE ADULT, by Bob and June Vetter, Elgin, IL: David C. Cook, 1978.

Honest, sensitive, full of real examples singles can relate to as well as sharing the example of Christ as one to whom singles can relate.

YOUNG ADULTS: A MEANINGFUL MINISTRY, Published jointly by the Board of Youth Ministry and the Board of Parish Education, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. BPE Bulletin #65080

A tool to help a congregation consider young adult needs in their parish, survey their young adults and design an effective parish ministry.

Middle-Age Adults

THE GERONTOLOGIST, by Dolores Borland, "Research on Middle-Age: An Assessment." August, 1978.

Acknowledging that most research investigating middle-age adults has been conducted within the last 15 years, the reviewer summarizes the results of the important studies and points to areas in need of further study.

THE OTHER GENERATION GAP: THE MIDDLE-AGED AND THEIR AGING PARENTS, Stephen Cohen and Bruce Bans, Chicago: Follett, 1978.

After describing physical, social and psychological changes affecting older persons, the authors provide middle-agers with a number of guidelines and resources that can help both generations.

THE MIDDLE-AGE CRISIS, by Barbara Fried, New York: Harper and Row, 1976.

A discussion of major issues facing middle-age adults, including identity, intimacy and marriage, power, aging and death, boredom and time. An easy-to-read resource described by one reviewer as "the most useful single document available for both personal reading and group discussion."

THE WONDERFUL CRISIS OF MIDDLE AGE, by Eda LeShan, New York: Warner Books, 1974.

A wordy discussion by a middle-ager with hang-ups which provides an occasional glimpse of insight.

THE SEASONS OF A MAN'S LIFE, by Daniel Levinson, New York: Alfred Knopf, 1978.

Based on interviews of 40 men with four different occupations, this study identifies major tasks and transitions of early and middle-adulthood. An exploratory work which adds important perspectives in understanding significant changes in the lives of middle-class men.

MIDDLE AGE AND AGING, editor Bernice Neugarten, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Though in need of an update, this reader includes a number of important articles related to the work, leisure, family life, and personalities of middle-age adults.

THE SECOND JOURNEY, by Gerald O'Collins, New York: Paulist Press, 1978.

Affirming the claim that each adult stumbles upon the major issue of mid-life somewhere between 35 and 45 and maintaining that church professionals need to face up to the critical questions as a routine, the author offers several suggestions about ways of coping during the second or middle journey.

PASSAGES: PREDICTABLE CRISES OF ADULT LIFE, by Gail Sheehy, New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976.

Based on an outline borrowed from Levinson and data collected by the writer from a sample of 115 case histories, this popular account provides a map of some of the key decisions facing some educated, upper middle-class men and women, ages 18 to 55.

EARLY AND MIDDLE ADULTHOOD, by Lillian Troll, Monterey: Brooks/Cole, 1975.

A noted researcher of adult and family life provides a sketch of the development of young and middle-age adults based on empirical studies.

PRIME TIME: THE MIDDLE YEARS, by Carl Uehling, Philadelphia: Lutheran Church Press, 1970.

A resource kit consisting of a reader for adult participants, a discussion guide, and a cassette. The publication date, the non-availability of this kit, and a scarcity of such materials for church educators point to a need for additional resources.

Marvin Bergman

Older Adults

THE COMING OF AGE, by Simone deBeauvoir, New York: Putman, 1972.

The author examines the biological, anthropological, historical and sociological views about old age. Contemporary older people's insights about themselves, time and relationships with the world are explored.

THE CHURCH AND THE OLDER PERSON, by David Moberg and Robert Gray, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977.

Surveying typical problems of older people, the authors challenge clergy and congregations to include a ministry to and with older persons. The spiritual and well-being of older people is one of the central themes. Empirical-based knowledge coupled with the church's mission are used to address such problems as fear of death, loneliness, and other crises. An excellent resource.

TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF AGING, editor Seward Hiltner, New York: Human Science Press, 1975.

A collection of essays on aging which includes: Eschatological Perspectives on Aging, Jewish Values and Sociopsychological Perspectives, a Preface to a Practical Theology of Aging and others.

PLANNING A MINISTRY WITH OLDER PERSONS, by John Jorganson and Catherine Crossan, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.

An information packet with step-by-step designs for beginning programs for older persons. The packet includes cassettes, filmstrips, educational materials and additional resources for getting started and maintaining a long-term program.

LIFE ENRICHMENT FOR THE ELDERLY, Minneapolis: Lutheran Brotherhood, 1973.

Four Lutheran social service agencies involved congregations specifically to study provisions for services to older people. The project was designed to raise the awareness level of congregations and many programs became spin-offs as a result.

(Continued on page 24)

the Adult Life Cycle:

An Annotated Bibliography

Address Correction Requested. Return Postage Guaranteed.

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Seward, Nebr.
Permit No. 4

Route to: _____

THE CONCEPT OF AGE by Simon
Lambert, New York: Basic Books, 1972.
The author examines the biological,
anthropological, historical and sociological
aspects of age. Contemporary
and future views of age. Contemporary
older people. The author's definition of
old age and its relationship with the world we
live in.

THE BROWN BOBBY by
William Bradford Huie, New York: Basic Books, 1972.
A young boy who lives with his
grandmother in a small town in
Alabama. The author's definition of
old age and its relationship with the world we
live in.

Middle Age Adults
The author's definition of middle age
and its relationship with the world we
live in.

book reviews

(Continued from page 23)

CLAIMING A FRONTIER: MINISTRY AND OLDER PEOPLE, by Robert McClellan, Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, The Ethel Percy Andrus Gerontology Center, 1977.

This resource provides a number of creative designs, field tested and evaluated, to help congregations foster services to their aging members. Resource banks for additional tools are included. A must for your committee on aging.

AGING, THE FULFILLMENT OF LIFE, by Henry Nouwen and W. Gaffney, Garden City: Doubleday, 1974.

The author through photographs and inspirational insights depict the aging process from birth to death. Aging is seen in terms of hope versus despair.

AGING: TODAY'S RESEARCH AND YOU, editor Beatrice O'Brien, Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, The Ethel Percy Andrus Gerontology Center, 1978.

This series of eight lectures was presented to older people to help them understand all the phases of aging. Contributions by various authors include: mental health, counseling, generational dynamics, continual learning, maximizing your potential and working with leisure. A valuable resource for a church library.

FAITH/FINANCES IN RETIREMENT, by Robert Peper, Apple Valley, Christian Retirement Association, 1978.

A Lutheran lawyer and clergyman addresses the issues of finances, legal affairs, housing, health and spiritual areas for retirement living. Self-help quizzes and numerous guidelines are included for the retiree or pre-retiree.

FOUNDATIONS FOR MINISTRY WITH OLDER PERSONS (The Bonus Years), by Thomas Robb, Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1968.

Suggesting that congregations consider life-centered ministry for older people, instead of only golden age clubs, the author provides models and programs which utilize community resources and accent prevention programs. Annotated bibliography included.

AGING IS NOT FOR SISSIES, by Terry Schuckman, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976.

Coping strategies for physical, mental and emotional challenges of the aging process include perspectives on faith and attitudes. Planning strategies for finances, education, housing and other areas also are a part of this short, inspirational resource.

Shirley Bergman