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Meeting the Spiritual Needs of Older Adults: A Successful Presbyterian Model

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**MEETING THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS: A
SUCCESSFUL PRESBYTERIAN MODEL**

Andrea Leihser Scandrett, B.A.

An Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Lindenwood College in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
September, 1994

ABSTRACT

This study presents a comprehensive evaluation of the motivations for and benefits of church attendance in the aged population. A survey of the active older members of a particular church was conducted in conjunction with a review of previous research on related subjects. These methods revealed that the primary and secondary motivations for church attendance were to worship and to fellowship, respectively. It was also found that church attendance plays a major role in the adjustment of the aged. However, attendance and participation are sometimes inadvertently discouraged by youth-oriented clergy. Churches can greatly contribute to the satisfaction of both the spiritual and social needs of their older members.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Virginia Turley and in memory of Earl Turley, who instilled in their granddaughter a legacy of natural sympathy and interest in older people.

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I wish to thank the members of the First Presbyterian Church in Kirkwood who helped me complete this project and Jan Riemers for giving me the opportunity to observe such a successful ministry.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

When reviewing the past articles and research reports that address the subject of religion and aging, there is an obvious dearth of materials that exist on this topic. On occasion, sociology of religion textbooks will refer to religious participation or to differences in religious participation by men and woman. In explaining research articles in the various gerontology journals, there are a few articles dealing with religion and aging but this clearly is not a topic that has caught the imagination and attention of large numbers of gerontologists.

Given the fact that the great majority of older persons profess some religious belief and when questioned, will assert that religion is very important in their lives, the sparsity of scientific writing on this subject is surprising. One would assume that a knowledge of the relationship between religion and aging should provide us with greater insight into the beliefs, values, and attitudes of a very large percent of the older American population. This paper will attempt to 1) review the past research on the topic of meeting the spiritual needs of older adults, 2) summarize the more significant findings of these

studies and 3) present data from a survey which directly asks older adults what they want and receive from actively participating in church.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ageism Among Clergy

The "graying" of America has received so much attention lately that the phrase has almost become a cliché. The "graying" of the church, however, has not received as much attention. Throughout history, the relationship between older members and clergy has been somewhat ambivalent. This relationship must change if clergy are to effectively follow their call in the ministry. As the number of older members in churches both increases and continues to age, parish clergy must be prepared for meeting the spiritual needs of their older members.

Older adults not only make up the majority of the congregation in many churches, but also depend on the church for their spiritual and social needs. The spiritual is seen as the source of life, enabling and sustaining values in society, providing the philosophical orientation to all of life, and touching every aspect of human conduct. Bollinger (1969) stated that:

Spiritual needs are the deepest requirements of the self, which, if met, make it possible for the person to function with a meaningful identity and

purpose, so that in all stages of life that person may relate to reality with hope (p. 55).

There is a distinction between "spiritual" and "religious". While not necessarily opposites, they are not synonymous. A spiritual need may be met by a religious act, such as praying or receiving Holy Communion, but many spiritual needs are met by warm and sympathetic human relationships. Often a spiritual need is best met by dealing with a physical need. The spiritual needs of the aging really are those of every person: the need for identity, meaning, love and wisdom (Moberg, 1971).

If meeting the spiritual needs of the elderly is so important, we must then ask an obvious question. Why is it that the spiritual dimension of life does not receive greater attention in geriatric education, social and behavioral science research, preventive and therapeutic care of the aging, and gerontological theory? Moberg (1970) states that one reason is the self-fulfilling prophecy that results from presuppositions of the leaders of these activities. Assuming the spiritual to be unimportant, they ignore it in their work. Since it is ignored, its relevance is not discovered, and "the religious factor" appears to be insignificant and even, for some, becomes tabooed as a topic for investigation. The clergy must not be

afraid of this topic, but rather be willing to deal with it head-on and be prepared for the inevitable "graying" of their own congregations.

According to Rowles (1985), elderly parishioners often place an embarrassingly high level of faith in the minister. The pastor is often the first to be called when a family is having difficulties (Runions, 1972) and twice as many elderly prefer to seek assistance from their minister than from a government agency (Keith, 1977). Far more elderly seek counseling from clergy than from psychologists, psychiatrists, or other professional counselors (Brink, 1977). The attitudes of the clergy toward aging and the aged are, therefore, crucial in determining their own ability to function and minister effectively in parishes which are increasingly comprised of older members.

Clergy's Detrimental Attitudes

Despite the extensive contacts that ministers have with their older members, it is often felt that this work is an unpleasant duty (Hammond, 1970). It is likewise assumed that clergy prefer to work with the young rather than the old and, in this sense, tend to be prejudiced against older people.

Hammond (1970) introduced a social-psychological explanation for this prejudice. It states that many clergy find work with older people incongruent with

their own definition of parish work. As a result, clergy find such work unsatisfactory.

Furthermore, clergy rate pastoral contacts with the young higher in satisfaction than those with the old (Longino and Kitson, 1976). It seems that churches, like the culture they are in, are youth-oriented.

Over twenty-five years ago, researchers were concerned with ageism in the church. In 1969, both Bunzel and Butler declared that gerontophobia and ageism were common ailments afflicting the clergy. This is very disturbing, considering that half of pastors' work of visiting, counseling and personally helping parishioners is directly related to aging (Moberg, 1962).

One revealing study asked the pastors to rate their own level of educational preparation in working with older adults. Of the pastors with reportedly adequate preparation, their congregations were more likely to be under 200 members and less likely to be in those of 1,000 or more. Interestingly, the clergy who felt that their past training with reference to aging was adequate were less likely than those of inadequate preparation to have a discussion group, a Bible class, a senior citizens club or a part-time clergyperson for older adults in their congregations. They also were

much more likely than those with self-reported inadequate training to report that there were no special activities for older adults other than those available for all ages (Moberg, 1975). Clearly, many clergy do not see their own detrimental attitudes or the direct or indirect ways they denigrate older adults and the expressive values they emphasize.

Using a reliable and valid attitude instrument, Kogan's Attitudes Toward Old People Scale, a 1992 study was done to measure attitudes of clergy relative to those of other reference groups and utilized variables significantly associated with differences in attitudes. The results of that study clearly invalidate the suggestions that the attitudes of clergy toward the aging are generally negative or characterized by stereotyped images of the elderly (Gulledge, 1991). None of the previous studies on ageism and clergy have had such positive results.

Seminaries

Some researchers have questioned whether the training received in seminaries adequately equips clergy to work with older adults. Others suggest that ageism among clergy is influenced by society's own negative attitudes towards aging. Either way, there must be some explanation as to why working with older parishioners is regarded as an unpleasant duty among

clergy (Longino and Kitson, 1976). With little educational training, clergy may not know how to deal with their own attitudes towards older members. This may lead to neglecting the very members who are most in need of the church.

Some research has shown that this phenomenon of ageism may be related to the training of the clergy. For those clergy who went through formal training, education in working with older adults may not have been part of the curriculum. Seminaries have traditionally emphasized the needs of children, youth, young adults and young families rather than those of adults in later years.

A survey of the catalogs from twenty-four American theological schools revealed direct reference to aging, the aged, and related concepts in only seventeen courses offered by fourteen of the seminaries. All of these were in the areas of religious education, pastoral care and human development. Only one had a course devoted exclusively to the aged, although numerous courses were available on children, young adults, etc. (Moberg, 1970).

In 1972, a similar but larger survey of 126 theological schools revealed that twenty-four had a special course to prepare students to minister to the aging, but in only two schools was the course required.

Twenty-eight schools provided continuing education programs for clergy in the area of aging and seventeen had a graduate program in which it was possible to specialize in ministries with and for the aged (NRTA-AARP, 1972).

Recognizing the lack of formal preparation of most clergy for ministries with and for the aging and sensing the growing importance of this area of ministry brings about an important realization. That is, many problems are interfering with effective ministry in churches and synagogues in which older adults attend.

The Importance of Church As A Place Of Worship

It appears that many clergy are neglecting the members who are generally the most faithful to the church. There is no question about the relative importance of the church among voluntary association memberships of the aged. More of the memberships of older persons in formal social groups are in religious associations and their affiliates than in all other types of voluntary social organizations combined (Moberg, 1971).

A large study of 1,700 elderly Minnesotans found that fifty-two to fifty-five percent of the men and sixty-six to seventy-one percent of the women reported that religion was the most important aspect of their lives (Taves and Hansen, 1963). Riley and Foner (1968)

concluded that belief in God is firmly ingrained in most older people.

Importance Of Church As A Social Institution

The church provides more than an opportunity to worship for many older people. It also provides a necessary social outlet. Socially, the church provides a number of functions which can be particularly useful for older Americans. The church provides a variety of different social activities which bring people of all ages and backgrounds together.

The social interaction that ensues tends to pull the individual into active social involvement and reduces social isolation. These activities can involve older adults in community concerns and current issues. Moreover, the interest shown to the individual by others involved in the activities becomes a source of social support. In addition, they draw attention away from oneself and towards the problems and concerns of others. All of these things have positive consequences for the elderly and are likely to improve the overall morale and outlook on life.

Clearly, spiritual needs are not satisfied solely within the context of organized religious groups. Indeed, many of them may be fulfilled in functional equivalents that ordinarily are interpreted as being quite contrary to churches (Moberg, 1971). As

Professor Matthes (1964) stated, religion has emigrated out of churches.

We live in a new spiritual climate, one in which new forms of spiritual activities are found in a wide range of institutional and noninstitutional contexts. The very newness of the spiritual dimension becomes a source or context of spiritual need for people in their later maturity (p. 158).

It is inevitable that religious groups should provide channels and occasions for the performance of other functions unrelated to their essential functions which are normative and theologically derived. In fact, there is danger that religious communities will be enveloped by these secondary functions and lose their essential reason for being. Paul Maves (1960) gives this example:

Churches may come to be looked upon in the category of social clubs providing only the opportunity to make friends and to have fun. Or the community or state may come to look to them as social agencies to perform whatever tasks the community may have in mind. Because the churches engage in social service or social action, they may be regarded as one more group among action groups to be used in a struggle for power. In actual fact, the secondary functions may become the main functions or may even be used as a disguise or

occasion for function completely unrelated to religion (p. 63-64).

Participation in religious groups is associated with other social relationships. Church members are more likely than nonmembers to be active in community associations, clubs, and other organizations, although the rates of voluntary association membership are lower among the oldest than among middle age categories. While this undoubtedly is partly due to other factors that are mutual influences on both types of participation, it is not unreasonable to think that association with people in church-related activities and organizations contributes to knowledge of other voluntary organizations; friendships in the church with persons who are members of other groups may lead to social participation in them (Moberg, 1965).

The faithfulness of church attendance itself has been attributed to the desire for sociability, especially as family members and friends move away, acquaintances die, and social contacts are reduced. Social isolation may be reduced by church participation.

The church offers the opportunity to socialize with peers in a socially approved milieu. Older members are treated with reasonable kindness in church

affairs rather than the condescension sometimes encountered in a social group work (Roemer, 1969).

In summary, the church as a social institution serves a number of functions. Various persons turn to it for a variety of reasons in the desire to meet various needs. Social service is no less important than spiritual service for the elderly. In fact, social service is at the same time spiritual service when it derives from the desire to act out the love of God (Robb, 1968).

How Age Affects Attendance

A common assumption of both laypersons and scholars is that people become more religious as they grow older and approach death. The findings on this issue are conflicting. Some studies have found that religion increases with age, others found that it decreases and still others argue that the level of religiosity remains constant with increasing age.

Much research has found that membership in churches tends to be higher at the more advanced ages, especially after age seventy-five and leadership positions in churches tend to be concentrated among older people. Other researchers have found evidence contrary to this. Clearly, these areas of spirituality bring about much disagreement. Further, there remains a dispute centered around whether attendance increases

or decreases with age. It is agreed, however, that churches are the most common type of community organization membership for older people.

In 1970, Bahr described four models categorizing the relationship between aging and church attendance--traditional, stability, family-cycle, and disengagement. In the traditional model, church attendance reaches a low during the ages of thirty and thirty-five, then gradually increases until old age.

The stability model views church attendance and age as being unrelated. Attendance throughout life remains fairly constant.

The family-cycle model stresses the importance of the marriage and child-rearing stages. In explaining female attendance patterns, this model suggests that the presence of children among young parents encourages high attendance rates until the last child reaches adolescence.

Age of the respondent is significant in that generally younger parents are those with young children for whom they are role models. When the children are assumed to have completed their religious instructions and established their habits, the parents become less concerned with their own attendance as their behavior is no longer a necessary model for socialization.

The disengagement model suggests that attendance is relatively high when a person is young and that religious behavior gradually declines as the individual passes through middle and old age. Church-related activities are assumed to be included among those behavior patterns no longer considered appropriate or necessary for those defined by society as aged.

The majority of studies seem to support the disengagement model. One of the earliest studies in this area was done by Morgan in 1937. She surveyed 381 New York recipients of old age assistance. She found that, though ninety-three percent indicated that they had earlier in their lives attended church, only forty-three percent continued to attend. Fifty-seven percent no longer attended; fifty-two percent of those indicated that they were physically unable to attend; thirty-nine percent indicated a loss of interest or a loss of belief.

A University of Chicago study found that the decrease in church attendance among aging persons is accompanied by increased listening to religious programs on radio and television (Fiske, 1961). A review of the existing literature in 1968 found that church attendance was generally at a high level among men and women in their sixties but became less regular in advanced old age (Riley and Foner, 1968).

In 1971, Moberg found that activities such as Bible reading, praying and meditation increased steadily with age, as church attendance among the religiously oriented decreased.

Blazer and Palmore (1976) found a decline in religious activity with aging. Positive religious attitudes, however, remained fairly stable.

This study addressed a new aspect of attendance. Church attendance is a convenient indicator of religious involvement but may say little about religious feelings. Studies have shown that, while there is a decline in religious activities outside the home with increasing age, religious feeling show an increase (Moberg, 1972).

Blazer and Palmore (1976) employed data from the Duke University longitudinal study and found that positive religious attitudes remained stable despite a general decline in religious activities.

If attendance does decrease with age, comparative studies reveal that participation in other social organizations declines at a much more rapid rate than participation in the church. It seems logical to say that age is only one of many factors that influence church attendance. Among older people, attendance is likely to be influenced by declining health, finances, and/or increasing transportation difficulties.

In reviewing much of the literature addressing church attendance, it seems conclusive that religion as a set of extradomiciliary rituals apparently decreases in old age. Meanwhile, the internal personal responses linked with man's relationship to God apparently increases among religious people. Thus, both disengagement from and re-engagement to religion are typical in old age.

Ways In Which Older Members Are Neglected

Declines in attendance may also be related to feelings of neglect. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for older people to feel neglected by churches in a number of ways. Despite declines in religious activities, religion plays a significant and increasingly important role in the personal adjustment of many older persons. Churches need to give special attention to their elderly members in order to compensate for their generally declining activities and to maximize the benefits of their religious experience.

The aged are more likely than other members to appreciate the church as a surrogate family which furnishes them with opportunities for being wanted more than being useful, for having diffuse and affective personal contacts rather than performing instrumental activities, and as a place for being comforted rather than challenged. This perspective is reinforced by

data indicating that pastoral calls from clergy and church friends are extremely important to older persons, relative to other church activities (Glock, Ringer, and Babbie, 1967).

Moberg (1972) noted that many churches tend to emphasize programs for adolescents and young families, lack outreach programs for older people, and force older people out of positions of responsibility within the church. These tendencies are important mechanisms that may encourage older adults to disengage from organized religion.

It is sad to realize that the state of today's churches is not much different from that of the churches years ago against which Moberg spoke out. In 1962, he published a paper that could easily describe most churches today. There are ministries of music, church administration, religious education, counseling and pastoral care and youth pastors. Rare are the clergy, however, who have specialized ministries to the aging and elderly outside of chaplaincies in retirement centers and nursing homes (Moberg, 1962, p. 51).

It is the responsibility of clergy to meet the spiritual needs of their older members and make their church a place for spiritual renewal and fellowship. Most ministers begin their careers assuming that worship services are as available to older people as

they are to everyone else. It is usually through contacts with shut-ins, hospitalized older people and older people in nursing homes that clergy first confront the problems of older members of the congregation. Only gradually do they come to recognize that many of their ambulatory older members also have problems (Atchley, 1994).

What many clergy and younger people in general fail to realize is that many older adults are experiencing a period in their lives that is filled with immense loss and overwhelming change. The elderly are compelled by society to disengage themselves from work and other social relationships to such an extent that

the central theme of aging, in our culture at least, could be summarized as a series of losses. These losses include physical faculties, an instrumental role in society, prestige, authority with own children, and close ties with loved ones because of death. Losses continue in the areas of income, home, and freedom. Finally, and possibly, most difficult to accept, the loss of an everlasting future on this earth (Ujhely, 1968, p. 26).

Although this research is over twenty-five years old, loss remains a central theme for many older people

today. All this loss is taking its psychological toll. It is well documented that depression is the most common emotional disorder among older adults (Butler, Lewis, and Sunderland, 1991), and although counseling is often effective, few elderly people seek professional help. They may, however, seek pastoral assistance. The rise of the pastoral counseling movement indicates that both clergy and parishioners believe religion plays an important role in the management of life crises (Sanua, 1969).

This observation has been supported by Krause and Van Tran (1989) who reported on a study which showed that thirteen percent of older adults seek help from the clergy in times of personal crisis, whereas only two percent seek assistance from a formal mental health professional under these circumstances. Clergy must realize that older people often rely on the various aspects of religion as essential coping resources.

Churches must not neglect the opportunity to provide useful roles for older persons during the retirement years. Older members can become deacons, elders or Sunday school teachers and thus, assume leadership roles in religious activities which they may have been deprived of in work activities at the time of their retirement.

Unfortunately, some research has revealed that few older people hold any positions of leadership in the church. In some churches, these positions are gradually relinquished or removed from them as they pass sixty years of age (Maves, 1960).

Psychological Benefits Of Attending Church

Past research points to religion as an important factor in the adjustment of the aged. It is often presumed that involvement in religious activity at this stage of life can be of critical importance in achieving and maintaining life satisfaction.

Spiritual well-being offers stability in the midst of the confusions of rapid social and technological change and of the deprivations associated with aging when familiar landmarks by which life is oriented are swept away. It protects the dignity and personal worth of the individual, establishes status in what a person is by virtue of God's action rather than in what he possesses or has accomplished, gives a generation-bridging understanding of oneself and others, enables the constructive handling of tensions and heightened emotions, stimulates efforts to correct social injustices, and provides a framework of meaning and values that points to the future in

hope even in the hour of death (Committee on Religion, 1960, p. 57).

The spiritual aspect of oneself provides a basis for finding a sense of meaningfulness and importance in life, and it aids in revealing and exercising the values which compensate for deprivations (Scudder, 1958). Self-image and personality apparently are influenced by religious orientations. The teachings of Judaism and Christianity affirm the dignity and worth of the individual and this apparently has a wholesome impact upon a substantial proportion of believers. Although some other doctrines also have negative consequences, such as accentuating feelings of guilt, religious beliefs and faith in God have helped disorganized geriatric patients overcome grief and cope with loneliness, unhappiness, and despondency (Wolff, 1959).

The experiences and problems of spiritual well-being spill over from and into all other realms of life activities. Phillip White, former Secretary of the Council on Foods and Nutrition, has indicated that food is associated with love, so when an older person feels rejected, shut out, unloved and socially isolated, his eating habits are affected. He begins to subsist on tea and toast and ends up in a hospital or nursing home (Dewey, 1970, p. 2).

Senility is frequently, if not always, a consequence of social relationships and external stress which produce anxiety and overtax the older person's ability to function (Oberleder, 1966). Psychosomatic ailments are widespread among the elderly, even though they frequently are not diagnosed as such because of the assumption that the conditions are inevitable consequences of aging. The personal habits of some aged people which make them revolting to others can similarly be traced to problems of social relationships (Gray and Moberg, 1961).

Functionalists argue that demoralization need not accompany retirement and growing older; they hold that the greatest loss of meaning will be experienced by those individuals for whom religion does not play a supporting role. Few research efforts have been advanced to assess this proposition.

Surveying the literature on religion and the aged between 1945 and 1971, Heenan (1972) found only seven articles related to personal adjustment. Of these, only one appears after 1961. What little research does exist tends to support the premise that religious affiliation is related to good personal and social adjustment.

A recent study found that individuals attending church more frequently today than fifteen years ago

scored highest on the life satisfaction scale. They were closely followed by those individuals whose church attendance patterns have remained relatively stable. Respondents attending church less today than fifteen years ago scored lower than the other two groups--with the lowest scores being made by those never attending church (Guy, 1982).

Another study found that the levels of religious involvement were not affected by the amount of stress experienced by study participants and religiosity can exert a beneficial effect on self-esteem, even in the absence of life crises (Markides, Levin, and Ray, 1987). In the same study, it was found that religious attendance was a significant predictor of life satisfaction when all available respondents were used.

It has also been found that, among Anglos, the effect of church attendance on life satisfaction increased significantly during the study interval. Blazer and Palmore (1976) found that religious activity and attitudes were correlated positively with measures of psychological well-being and that these correlations were higher among older persons and increased with time.

Finally, back in 1956, Moberg concluded that either those who were well-adjusted engaged in many religious activities or engaging in many religious

activities contributed to adjusting well in old age but, either way, the two were related.

Religious faith and activity may be the only way a person can assure his or herself of his or her continued worth in spite of the losses and disabilities wrought by aging.

It is for this reason that Mathiasen (1955), among others, maintains that religion is the key to a happy life in old age...[for] man is essentially a spiritual being...A sense of the all-encompassing love of God is the basic emotional security and firm spiritual foundation for people who face the end of life (p. 57).

It may be of no coincidence that more than ninety percent of seven hundred centenarians said that religion was very important to them, and large numbers were still actively involved in church attendance, participation in sacramental rites and even service activities for their churches and synagogues (Beard, 1969).

Nursing Home And Home Bound Ministry

One population of older church members that needs to be addressed is the small proportion of nursing home residents. These people are usually members who use to be pillars of the church but are now physically and/or mentally deteriorating. Out of necessity they have left the church with regard to attendance, and often,

the church has left them. The church must learn how to fulfill their spiritual needs and learn to accept their inability to serve as active church members.

This group of older members assisted by the nation's health care system may have been overlooked during the past forty years of progress that has emphasized a spiritual ministry to the sick.

One study on nursing home ministry found that there was from nine to thirteen worship services per month attended by twenty percent of the nursing home residents (Justice, 1991). The sermons given seemed to be the same as those delivered to the minister's congregation. That is to say, few focused on the specific needs of the aged or the needs of nursing home residents. Almost no men attended the services. One Administrator said the men respond best to a man who will sit down and talk with them, but almost nobody except family ever does (p. 105). According to an Activities Director, after two years nobody ever gets a visit from anyone from their church (p. 106). Every respondent in the study emphasized the need for a one-on-one ministry to the nursing staff. Clearly, nursing homes are yet another area desperately in need of effective ministry.

The expectation by the elderly that they will be visited by clergy or other church representative when

shut-in or admitted to a nursing home or hospital can have highly negative results if the expectation is not fulfilled. In a British study of the socially isolated, only 5.4% had seen their religious minister or vicar during the last week, but the majority of these were seen at a religious service or other activity. There was little indication that the clergy detected need among older people and alerted the social services to those needs (Tunstall, 1966).

Persons who are the most strongly bound by ethnic, cultural and religious ties are the least likely to feel isolated, abandoned, and hopeless when they are patients in nursing homes. Their culturally determined behavior assists them to withstand the identity-shattering experience of entering an institution (Dominick and Stotsky, 1969).

Church attendance among nursing home residents, home-bound church members and active older adults is very significant in determining their level of life satisfaction. Data has indicated that as age increases, proportionately more individuals with limited physical activity never attend church or attend church less frequently. The physical limitation most frequently cited was the inability to walk well.

Church attendance tends to decrease with age as limited physical activity is more prevalent at the

upper levels of the age continuum. Consequently, if individuals who are physically limited and unable to attend church could maintain contact with the church through church newsletter, telephone calls, personal or ministerial visits, life would be more satisfying than if church contact were completely severed.

In one study, individuals who were somewhat or more physically limited and attended church infrequently tended to score higher on the life satisfaction scale when church contact was maintained although not as high as those who attended church frequently. Individuals with complete physical limitations who attended church infrequently did not demonstrate this pattern. Quite possibly the physical limitations were so overpowering that they rendered any successful life adjustment invalid (Guy, 1982).

In summary, with increasing age and increasing physical limitations, frequent church attendance is not always possible. For homebound members and nursing home residents who cannot attend church this decline in church attendance does not necessarily precipitate a complementary decrease in interest. On the contrary, if church contact is maintained, interest may remain high and, along with it, life satisfaction. Those individuals maintaining contact with the church (newsletter, telephone, personal visits), though church

attendance is infrequent, will score higher on the life satisfaction scale than those individuals having no contact (Guy, 1982).

It has been claimed that people die of damage to their dignity as often as they die of medical causes (McRoberts, 1970, p. 38). Clergy can play a vital role in the lives of nursing home and home-bound church members. Maintaining church contact may be one way of repairing some of their damaged dignity.

Better Ways To Minister To The Aging

It seems clear that churches, or more specifically, clergy, are not doing all they can to meet the spiritual needs of older adults. It would seem that changes in programs or priorities are called for if the elderly population is to define the church as a relevant resource as they confront their material and spiritual problems.

A survey of the congregations and parishes that had specific ministries for older adults most commonly offered a discussion group or Bible class for older adults and a senior citizens or golden age club (Moberg, 1975). I am unaware of any studies that have addressed what types of programs older adults themselves would like to have in churches. This can be problematic as freedom of choice is already limited for too many aging people. Programs are planned for them

instead of with them. They are given an opportunity to receive but not to give.

In Moberg's study in which clergy were asked to rank the needs of their own ministries, knowledge of community resources to serve the aging and elderly was number one. The other needs in order of importance as perceived by the pastors were: suggestions for innovative programs, suggestions for meeting spiritual needs, how to meet other needs, how to help middle-aged people prepare for retirement, information about the aging process, assistance with ministries for the sick, dying and bereaved, relationships between the generations, and lowest of all, problems with the clergy's own attitudes and fears of aging (Moberg, 1975). Unfortunately, the need ranked as least important may be the most important obstacle to overcome before the church can effectively minister to its older members.

Some denominations are beginning to appoint persons to the staffs of their national boards with major or full-time responsibility for the promotion of programs for older persons. The Methodist church has had a full-time person on its General Board of Education staff since 1945. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has followed suit. In these and other

denominations some of the responsibility is shared among the staff members of the various boards.

For example, the person in charge of adult education, the person in charge of adult education of the board of education, the board of pensions, and in some cases, notably the Lutheran churches, the board of inner missions is responsible for promoting programs for the aged. When staff members are not specifically charged by their denominations with responsibility to develop programs, what is done depends upon personal concern and commitment.

Probably the one type of special program for older people which has caught on most generally in the churches is that of the so-called Golden Age clubs. In a sense these are a development of the adult Bible class movement and an extension to later maturity of types of programs developed for young people and young adults in the churches.

Many Protestant churches have found that their organized adult Bible classes have inadvertently turned into classes of older adults. While these meet the needs of some older people in a way, many of these seem to be in the process of withering away, and many of their members are discouraged and downhearted by the depletion of their rank, for they seem to be unable to

recruit new members or to broaden their programs to meet the needs of their new members.

In 1960, Maves observed thirteen different Methodist churches over a two year period in an attempt to gain an impression of the churches actual relation to the aged and to see what would be involved in arousing the interest of the clergy and in developing programs in a local church. A committee devoted to the Christian religious education of older people summarized the findings particularly with respect to the thirteen churches studied. The author concluded that (1) the religious education of older people should be an important and integral part of the total ministry; (2) that, in general, the program of the churches for the religious education of older people, while of considerable value, was not nearly so effective in helping persons as it ought to be and could be; (3) that the primary factors in the effectiveness of such programs are the personal adjustment and professional competence of the minister in charge; and (4) that the church has a very important part to play in helping persons find meaningfulness in later maturity.

Sheehan, Wilson, and Marella (1988) found that churches in which responsibility for meeting their members' social needs was a major goal were much more

likely than other churches to offer church-sponsored programs for older people. Interestingly, having a higher proportion of older people in the congregation was unrelated to the offering of programs for older members.

The Special Committee on Aging at the 1961 White House Conference on Aging recommended that church congregations; recognize the special gifts of wisdom, serenity, and understanding with which their elder members are often specially endowed and invite them to grow in wisdom, to deepen their relationship with God, and to accept the assurance of eternal life. Congregations were invited to provide suitable transportation and facilities for the aging in order to enable participation in worship and other services. Greater use of religious radio, television and recordings, as well as personal ministries to the aging by members and leaders, were encouraged. State, county and municipal governments were encouraged to provide chaplaincy service to public institutions serving the aging. Relationships with and treatment of each older person as an individual and active roles of responsible membership were encouraged.

Also advocated were family life education, elimination of the idolatrous cult of eternal youth and replacement with religious convictions of the beauty

and worth of old age, provision for specialized training of the clergy and lay workers in understanding the needs and potentialities of old age in cooperation with every segment of the community in efforts to provide facilities and services for the aging.

It was concluded that:

Religion binds one to creation and the Creator, and enables one to face the future with hope. This group summons, then, the great religious bodies of the nation, their congregations, seminaries, organizations, and related agencies, and all Americans who share their concern for the aged, to join in expanded efforts towards seeing that each of our senior citizens receives the benefits, spiritual and material, they richly deserve (Special Committee on Aging, 1961. p. 56-57).

Numerous individuals and groups have suggested goals for aging that pertain to the need for spiritual well-being. Those listed here are not a complete summary, but they are representative of the types of goals proposed. (For a complete description of each, see Moberg, 1971).

1. Assistance in Cultivating a Satisfying Philosophy of Life.

2. Education (specifically for those working with older persons).
3. Enrichment of Living
4. Therapeutic Services
5. The Right to Die

With regard to goal implementation, Hammond has written:

Numerous sources provide a rich assortment of ideas and programs for ministering to the aged. What is needed, rather, is a rationale and a specification of organized ideology which permits choices to be made in a nonrandom way.

Sociology is only one source of help, but so also might cost accounting, psychiatry or political science have relevant theory for advancing the church's understanding of its position towards the aging. It may well be one of history's greater ironies that, at the same time society becomes more differentiated it produces larger proportions of aged persons whose needs appear to be for less differentiation. The gerontological strategy should, it would seem, be directed toward easing the strains of that differentiation (Hammond, 1969, p. 301-302).

It is simple to delineate generalized goals for the spiritual well-being of the aging. To implement

them, however, will necessitate a great deal of coordinated effort by people from a wide range of organizations and institutions. While religious groups might well take the lead in such planning in each community, cooperation with key agencies and personnel in all of the helping professions will be needed to cope fully with the magnitude of the task, and the stimulus and support of State and Federal agencies will make a tremendous difference in the nature and scope of the services provided (Moberg, 1971).

In conclusion, to implement services to meet the spiritual needs of the elderly, one should have a clear elaboration of goals, a survey of older persons in the congregation and community and of their needs. There must be a discovery of means for meeting those needs through existing agencies and programs, identification of remaining gaps in services and of corresponding resources available. These elements are necessary as a basis for developing systematic and coordinated church programs to meet the spiritual and other needs of the aging (Moberg, 1971).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

To measure how one particular church is meeting the spiritual needs of its older members, a convenience survey was taken of the older church members. In this particular church, over thirty-five percent of the members are over sixty years old. This church also has a staff person dedicated to the senior adult ministry. Surveys were handed out to those subjects who met the following criteria: sixty-five years of age or over, a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Kirkwood, MO, and an active participant in the church. The last category was determined by handing out the surveys at the following programs: a Sunday school class, a men's breakfast, a day trip and an exercise class. This convenience sample consisted of sixty-seven men and women. The survey was to be anonymous and completed at home. There was a self-addressed stamped envelope included to encourage a high return percentage. The survey was an adaptation of three different surveys published in 1991 for Presbyterian congregations (Simpson, 1991)

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

General information about the active older church members is reported in Section 1. Each question is grouped according to category and does not appear in the same order as in the survey. Participants were asked to circle or fill in all appropriate answers. Due to the nature of the questions, the total percentage does not always equal one hundred percent.

Section 1: General information on the active older members.

Living arrangements:

- 58% Live with a spouse
- 40% Live alone
- 8% Live in a retirement home
- 6% Live with a child
- 4% Live with a sibling

Distance from the Kirkwood 1st Presbyterian Church:

- 88% Live within 5 miles
- 12% Live between six and fifteen miles away
- 0% Live over sixteen miles away

Types of transportation used:

- 92% Drive their own car
- 6% Ride with a friend
- 2% Walk
- 0% Use public transportation

Self-description of health:

- 16% Excellent
- 54% Very Good
- 28% Fair
- 2% Poor
- 0% Very Poor

Marital status:

- 50% Married
- 42% Widowed
- 4% Never Married
- 4% Divorced
- 0% Separated

Most enjoyed leisure or social activity:

- 32% Sports
- 22% Reading
- 20% Bridge
- 8% Gardening, Movies
- 6% Pres club, Symphony/Concerts, Travel, Time

with friends

2% Computers, Painting, PEO membership,
Volunteering

Participation in programs or activities at the local
senior citizen's facilities:

64% Yes

32% No

4% No response

Length of membership at the Kirkwood 1st Presbyterian
church:

31.75 years average length of membership

52 years is the longest time membership

3 years is the shortest time membership

Membership status:

100% of tabulated results were members

82% of all returned surveys were members

Employment:

82% Retired

6% Unemployed

4% Employed part-time

2% Employed full time

20% Of all surveyed act as volunteers

Type of career (present or former):

- 28% Teacher
- 18% Homemaker
- 16% Secretary
- 12% Sales
- 6% Chemist
- 4% Business, Ministry
- 2% Artist, Construction, Librarian, Nurse,
Telephone Operator
- 2% No reply

Distribution of age:

- 14% 65-69
- 28% 70-74
- 32% 75-79
- 22% 80-84
- 4% 85-89
- 0% 90 or over

These findings suggest that several different variables contribute to active church membership among older adults. Proximity to the church is clearly a factor, as well as good health and ability to provide own transportation. In this study, marital status does not seem to be related to active church membership. The effects of previous employment, favorite leisure

activities, employment status, and age also seem to be inconsequential.

The motivations for and benefits of attending church are reported in Section 2. Again, these are questions related to the motivational and beneficial aspects of church participation and do not appear in this order in the survey.

Section 2: Motivations for and benefits of church attendance.

Primary reasons for attending church:

- 46% Worship
- 24% Fellowship
- 4% Learning
- 2% Habit, To learn, To witness

What part of the Senior Adult Ministries is most enjoyable:

- 26% Trips
- 18% Bible Study/Sunday School
- 12% Luncheons, Exercise
- 8% Pres Club, Worship
- 6% Men's Breakfast, Women's Circles,
- 4% Stephen ministry
- 2% Aiding other seniors, Book groups, Music,

Quilting, Telephone Ministry, Wildflower walks

Reasons for choosing the 1st Presbyterian church of
Kirkwood:

- 58% Denomination
- 34% Location, Ministering staff
- 30% Activities
- 18% Miscellaneous others

Most meaningful aspects of the 1st Presbyterian
Church's programs:

- 92% Worship services
- 86% Relationships with others
- 66% Music program
- 54% Special services (Easter, Thanksgiving,
Christmas)
- 36% Special events (Communion, baptism, weddings),
Fellowship dinners
- 32% Sunday School, Serving on boards or committees
- 6% Working with children
- 2% Other

The idea that older church members are active in a primary effort to meet their social needs is not supported. The primary reason for attending church was slightly higher for worship than for fellowship. The

most meaningful aspect of church was the worship service, closely followed by relationships with others. Spiritual aspects of the church were mentioned as the most enjoyable aspect, followed by more social responses.

Interestingly, when the survey gave the participants the opportunity to write in their favorite aspect of the church, the responses were first, social activities (trips and tours), and second, spiritual activities (Bible studies and Sunday school). Denomination was the largest motivator for choosing this particular church, followed by location.

To determine if this church was meeting the various needs of its older members, several questions were asked concerning this issue, again, not in this order on the survey.

Section 3: How the 1st Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood is meeting the needs of its elderly members.

Areas of need experienced in day-to-day living:

- 24% Odd jobs around the house
- 12% Help with housecleaning
- 6% Obtaining information on areas of need,
Someone to talk with
- 4% Assistance in balancing the checkbook,

Spiritual guidance and counseling, preparation of food

2% Caring for spouse, Money matters, Transportation for grocery shopping, General transportation, Other

What areas that the church could be of assistance:

28% Spiritual guidance and counseling

22% Visitation

18% Help with odd jobs

16% Obtaining information, General transportation

12% Transportation for grocery shopping

10% Caring for spouse

8% Assistance with balancing the checkbook

6% Money matters

2% Food preparation, Housecleaning

Ways to express faith not presently available at the 1st Presbyterian Church:

66% No

6% Yes

28% No reply

Types of activities most enjoyed or would like the church to provide:

60% Bible study and discussion

- 54% Trips and tours
- 52% Study and discussion of issues and concerns of adults over the age of sixty-five
- 48% Social gatherings
- 28% Interest groups (art, crafts, music, drama)
- 22% Retreats
- 14% Intergenerational groups, Recreation
- 10% Groups for recently widowed or adults caring for aging parents, Programs and activities with other congregations
- 0% No separate programs for adults over sixty-five

The one event or happening in life the church could celebrate:

- 22% Christmas and/or Thanksgiving
- 16% Wedding anniversary
- 8% Anniversary of joining the church
- 6% Birthday, Reaching a goal or receiving recognition
- 8% Other
- 0% Children's birthdays, Moving

Areas of ministry that could be improved to meet spiritual, social, and emotional needs:

- 32% Completely satisfied

Suggestions: Bible based Christian Education,
Book reading groups, Closer contact with members
and committees, Daytime Bible study, More
involvement with members through small groups,
More "Jazz-Ma-Tazz" in worship, New cook, Nurse on
staff to address health issues of the aged,
Revival meetings, Time constraints

The first question shows that all the possible areas of need mentioned were experienced by at least one respondent. Further, all the needs received some percentage of the votes as areas with which the church could help. Only 6% of the respondents were unable to express their faith as they would like. Of those, none indicated how they would like to express their faith and several gave no answer. This may indicate a misunderstanding of the question.

When asked what activities were most enjoyed or should be offered at the church, the options with the most responses were activities that the church provides. The majority of those who responded most wanted the church to help them celebrate Christmas and/or Thanksgiving, which the Church does do. The church does not have a special celebration for wedding anniversaries, as requested by 16% of the respondents.

The last question on the survey welcomed complaints and suggestions for change. Thirty-two percent wrote in that they were completely satisfied. Only ten respondents made suggestions for change.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This survey (Appendix A) did not produce any profound results, nor was that its purpose. The purpose was simply to find out who the active members were, what they needed from their church, and whether or not they were getting those needs met. It is clear from the data that the active members of the church are also active in their communities. This level of social interaction does not seem to be dependent on marital status but, not surprisingly, is related to health, ability to provide own transportation, and the member's proximity to the church. The findings that most members attend church to worship and that the average length of membership was 31.8 years, support the stability theory. This theory states that older people do not become more religious as they approach the last years of their lives but, rather, maintain the same level of religiosity throughout life (Bahr, 1970). Past studies have indicated that older persons have come to accept the reality of their own death and are not directly worried about the termination of their lives, which also supports the stability theory.

One study found that fewer than 10% of those over age sixty-five engage in active sports (Cutler and

Hendricks, 1990). Contrary to those results, 32% of the participants in this study rated sports as their most enjoyed leisure activity. Thirty-two percent rated serving on committees as the most meaningful aspect of church. Sadly, previous research has shown that these roles are gradually taken away from older adults (Maves, 1960).

It is interesting that no participant chose the option of "no separate activities for older adults" in question 12 which asked what do you most enjoy or want the church to provide. Clearly, these older members want separate activities and will participate in them if such programs are available.

A surprising finding was that older members did not turn to the church primarily for socializing. In the survey there were four questions which primarily asked the same thing, why do you continue attending church? When options were given, either spiritual or social, every time the spiritual reasons were greater.

For example, question 5 asked for the primary reason for attending church and the responses were overwhelmingly to worship. However, in question 14, the respondents were asked what aspect of the ministry was most enjoyable to them. Without any options to choose from, the respondents had to fill in their own answers. Eighty-two percent of the responses were

"non-spiritual" social events provided through the church such as exercise class, luncheons, and trips. Thirty-two percent responded with a "spiritual" event such as worship services, Stephen Ministry, and Sunday school.

Perhaps question 14 was misleading, indicating to some that it was referring to an aspect of church other than the worship service. But perhaps it revealed a fascinating truth. These members attend church to worship but they are active in this church, and enjoy this church because of the social interaction that the church provides. This finding is significant because numerous studies have found a strong correlation between church attendance and life satisfaction in later years (Guy, 1982). If older adults enjoy their church because of the social interaction it provides, they will probably continue attending the church and will, thus, be more satisfied with their lives.

Studies of social class stratification indicate that local churches tend to be composed of persons of similar social status. If social status is important in determining the composition and participation of persons in churches and if retirement tends to threaten or weaken a person's social status, does this have any effect upon his relation to the church? Without special programs for older adults, one would tend to believe

that it does. It is noticeable that the larger denominations with more resources in terms of national board staffs have taken the lead in the development of special denominational programs and that the denominations with the stronger traditions of pastoral care and social welfare services have pioneered in such programs, responding first to the challenge of aging.

Such a denomination is the Presbyterian. Eighty percent of Presbyterian churches report special social groups for older people including age segregated Sunday school classes (Atchley, 1994). The members of this church were at an advantage by being part of a large congregation (2,060 members with 730 over age 60), having a person on staff responsible for planning activities for older adults, and for being part of a Presbyterian denomination. In this particular church, all of the needs that were chosen and suggested as those experienced in day to day living can be met through various programs at the church. Specifically, a Stephen Minister or a member of P.E.A.R.L. could assist with any or all of these. For a complete list of the church's programs and a description of each, see Appendix B.

There were several limitations in this study. The data is based on results from a convenience study which does not allow for larger numbers or varying

backgrounds. Nearly all the respondents were caucasian, upper class senior citizens located in a suburb of a metropolitan city. There are various studies that would be interesting to do such as surveying different denominations and faiths or surveying nursing home and home-bound church members to assess their levels of satisfaction with the church in meeting their spiritual needs. Face-to-face interviews may have encouraged different interpretations of the data but may have discouraged honest answers. This does seem to be one of the first studies that has asked senior members what they do and do not want from a Senior Adult Ministry.

The First Presbyterian Church of Kirkwood is to be commended for its ministry towards the older members. From the survey results, it is clear that the participants are satisfied with the church and feel that their needs are being met. Other churches would do well to follow this example of effective ministry to the elderly.

Churches play an immeasurable role in helping their older members successfully adjust to growing older and the changes that ensue. Clergy must acknowledge this responsibility and act accordingly. If the facts of aging are not taught in seminaries, then, perhaps clergy should not be held responsible for

their ageism, but rather the educational institutions they attended. Seminaries must teach future clergy about the aging process and how to effectively minister to an older congregation.

Ageism in our society runs rampant, earning cosmetic companies alone four billion dollars annually in the name of eternal youth. Ageism does not seem too serious if society only wants to help hide wrinkles, but if those wrinkles keep pastors from dealing with the spiritual needs of their older members, it becomes a very serious problem.

It is no secret that older people, on the average, are closer to death than younger people. Have they been given the opportunity to give their lives to Christ and worship with other believers or have they been neglected and turned away at a time when they are most in need of the church?

The clergy must be available to the older members and be more sympathetic to the needs that come with aging. They should also deal with their own attitudes toward aging and older people before they unintentionally make older people feel unwanted or spiritually unfulfilled.

The time has come for the church to make meeting the spiritual needs of its older members a top priority. Spirituality has been a priority for so many

older persons and now they both need and deserve to have their spiritual and social needs met through the church. Now is the time for clergy to follow the examples of such churches as the First Presbyterian in Kirkwood, MO. No older member voiced a need that their church could not meet. Clergy must assume the awesome responsibility of caring for their members' aging souls. May it be the goal of all present and future clergy to never have a older member's words be those of the Psalmist who said, I looked to my left and I looked to my right, but no man careth for my soul.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

SIXTY-FIVE AND OLDER MINISTRY SURVEY

Please circle all appropriate responses.

1. Living arrangements:

A. Do you:

1. Live with your spouse
2. Live alone
3. Live with child or children
4. Live with one or more friends
5. Live with parent or parents
6. Live in retirement home
7. Other _____

B. Approximately how far do you live from the Kirkwood 1st Pres. church?

1. Five miles or less
2. Between six and fifteen miles
3. Between sixteen and thirty miles
4. More than thirty miles

2. Health:

A. How would you describe your health?

1. Excellent
2. Very good
3. Fair
4. Poor
5. Very poor

B. For transportation, you

1. Drive your own car
2. Ride with a friend
3. Use public transportation
(including CORP services)

3. What is your marital status?

1. Married
2. Widowed
3. Never married
4. Divorced
5. Separated

4. What one leisure or social activity do you most enjoy? _____

A. Do you participate in any programs or activities carried out by local senior citizens' facilities? Yes No (circle one)

5. What is the primary reason why you attend church? _____

A. Did you choose the First Pres. church because of the...

1. Denomination
2. Location
3. Activities
4. Minister
5. Other _____

B. How long have you been attending this church? _____

C. Are you a member? Yes No (circle one)

6. Employment:

A. Are you presently

1. Employed full-time
2. Employed part-time
3. Unemployed
4. Retired
5. A volunteer

7. What type of work have you been involved in most of your life? _____

8. Do you experience any of these areas of need in your day-to-day living?

- A. Assistance in balancing your checkbook
- B. Finding someone to do odd jobs around the house
- C. Getting to the store to purchase food
- D. Help with accounting or other money matters
- E. Obtaining dependable information about areas of need (transportation, home health care, etc.)
- F. Periods of time when you would like a visitor
- G. Preparation of food
- H. Help with housecleaning

- I. Help with caring for a spouse
- J. Transportation
- K. Spiritual guidance and counseling
- L. Other _____

9. Which of the above do you feel the church could be of assistance? List letters only.

10. What things at the church are the most meaningful to you?

- A. Worship services
- B. Relationships with others
- C. Sunday school
- D. Fellowship dinners
- E. Music program
- F. Serving on a board/committee
- G. Special functions such as trips
- H. Special services: Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas
- I. Special events: Communion, baptism, weddings
- J. Working with children
- K. Other _____

11. Are there ways you would like to express your faith at the church that are not available to you at this time?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

If yes, please indicate: _____

12. What kinds of activities do you most enjoy or would like the church to provide?

- A. Study and discussion about issues and concerns identified by a group of adults over age sixty-five
- B. Bible study and discussion
- C. Social gatherings
- D. Recreation
- E. Trips and tours
- F. Interest groups (art, crafts, music, drama)
- G. Groups for recently widowed or adults caring for aging parents
- H. Retreats
- I. Programs and activities with other congregations
- J. Intergenerational groups (with children, youth, younger adults)
- K. No separate programs for adults over sixty-five

L. Other suggestions _____

13. If the church could help you celebrate one event or happening in your life, what would you like it to be?

- A. Birthday
- B. Child's or children's birthday(s)
- C. Christmas day and/or Thanksgiving day
- D. Anniversary of joining the church
- E. Move to a particular location
- F. Reaching a particular goal or receiving recognition
- G. Wedding anniversary
- H. Other _____

14. In what part of the Senior Adult Ministry at this church do you most enjoy participating? _____

15. What areas of the ministry could be improved to better meet your spiritual, social and emotional needs? _____

Please circle the age group to which you belong.

- 65-69
- 70-74
- 75-79
- 80-84
- 85-89
- 90-94
- 95-99
- 100+

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS

<u>NAME</u>	<u>AVE. # PARTICIPANTS</u>	<u>YEARS IN EXISTENCE</u>
P.E.A.R.L.	107	6
Round Robin Bridge	84	4
Thanksgiving Dinner	13	3
Super Friday Specials	21	1
Senior Adult Luncheons	36	20
Women's Circles	227 (180 are 65+)	50
Telephone Ministry	12	10
Men's Breakfast	23	58
1st Floor Greeter	67	3
Exercise Class	19	5
Seminars	18	4
Senior Advisory Committee	12	7
Stephen Ministry	8	8
Adult Sunday School	60	50
Pres Club	60	25
Trips	23	7
Small Group Discussion	12	5

1) Presbyterians Extending Assistance, Relief, Love

This service provides the following: meal preparation, grocery shopping, light housekeeping, laundry/ironing, yard work including snow removal, minor household repair, telephone reassurance, home visits, transportation, and any other basic needs older members experience.

2) Round Robin Bridge

Each team plays ten other teams. Teams are to play once per month. Winner receives a traveling trophy. Fee is \$20.00 per couple.

3) Thanksgiving Dinner

Everyone brings a dish. This program has not met with great success but continues to be offered for those who need it.

4) Super Friday Specials

Programs that use the mind. Past programs have included: learning how to save photographs, art classes, classes at the local botanical garden.

5) Senior Adult Luncheons

This popular program involves a \$5.00 fee for lunch and a guest speaker, usually from the community.

6) Women's Circles

Fifteen women are assigned per circle and meet once a month for lunch and Bible studies. Women of all ages are involved but predominately those over sixty-five.

7) Telephone Ministry

Volunteers help organize church services to be conference on home-bound members' phones. This service, through the phone company, is free.

8) Men's Breakfast

Breakfast and program. Examples of past speakers and programs: City councilman, CPA spoke on tax

preparation, WWII memories, HAM radio operation, informational session on hospice.

9) First Floor Greeters

Volunteers direct people who come in to the church, answer the phone, send mailings, general office tasks.

10) Exercise Class

Classes are offered twice a week for one hour each. All states of physical ability are incorporated.

11) Seminars

Examples of last year's seminars: CPR, First aid, How to choose a nursing home, What is Alzheimer's disease? All seminars are open to the public.

12) Senior Advisory Committee

Twelve members, all over 65, sit on this committee, which is headed by the Senior Adult Minister. Programs are planned for the older members by older members.

13) Stephen Ministry

After 50 hours of training through the church, seniors are qualified to offer grief support to bereaved older members.

14) Adult Sunday School

While classes are open to all ages, generally three to four classes are directed at older adults.

15) Pres Club

Once a month, seniors meet for dinner and a program. The fee is \$5.00 or a dish. Examples of past programs: choir group performed, missionary spoke, photographer gave slide show, guest beekeeper.

16) Trips

Examples of trips recently offered: visit the state capital building in Jefferson City, symphony, wildflower hike, bird watching.

17) Small Group Discussion

Discussions are both spiritually and socially oriented. Seniors lead the discussions.

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