

AGenda, January 99

From the Editor

One of the new words I like to use is synchronicity, a word Carl Jung used to describe meaningful occurrences. If you look at your life story, you can discover many such moments, when things just happened that you did not plan or control.

Surely the many good things that are happening in Older Adult Ministry across our church are evidences of these "meaningful occurrences." One recalls the wise words of the aged Mordecai to the young Esther, "Who knows? You may have come to the kingdom for such a time as this!"

Older Adult Ministry is a movement whose time has come! The outstanding work being done at our Older Adult Ministry Office in Louisville and the exciting momentum of the POAM Network give evidence of this work of the Spirit. The International Year of Older Persons this year will provide further impetus to this movement.

Our thanks to all who have written regarding our last issue, Caring for the Caregiver. Reports indicate that some churches have xeroxed copies for their members, and one faculty member of a School of Nursing has done the same for all her students. We appreciate this affirmation.

A visitor to Washington, D.C., spied these words engraved on a government building: "The Past is Prologue." Puzzled, he asked the taxi driver, "What do these words mean?" The driver replied, "You ain't seen nothing yet!"

As 1999 brings even greater challenges and opportunities to our work in older adult ministry, may we all believe with Esther that indeed "we have come to the kingdom for such a time as this."

Faithfully,
Dick

A Giant Leap for Seniors

A New York Times editorial on John Glenn's return to space:

The greater meaning of this flight has nothing to do with research or even with space. Rather it is the dramatic symbolism of a robust, healthy senior citizen shaping his own destiny. This old space warrior refused to exit quietly. Instead he kept nagging and nagging until he bent the space bureaucracy, and his own family, to acquiesce in his dream for one more flight. Few senior citizens can exert the political clout of a John Glenn to achieve their goals, but the re-launching of this space-age icon is being

taken—indeed, seized upon—as a symbol of what a growing cohort of energetic seniors can achieve if their aspirations and capabilities are not ignored. The irony of this much-ballyhooed flight is that it may do more to combat ageism on the ground than to register new triumphs in space.

John D. MacLeod Memorial Fund for AGenda Goes Over the Top!!!

At press time the total given to the John D. MacLeod Fund, along with other contributions to AGenda, had reached \$14,190. These generous donors have made the continuance of AGenda secure for another year.

Special thanks to the following large donors:

Presbytery of New Hope—\$1,000

Presbyterian Association of Homes Services/Aging—\$770

Offering from Montreat Conference—\$ 650

Other Donors:

Zeno and Dorothy Stalnaker

Paul and Dorothy Kiewit

Margaret Neece

Gwen Beatty (in honor of Richard L. Morgan)

Hugh McPherson

Clarence Reasner

Despite our success, we must redouble our efforts to raise funds to insure the future publication of AGenda, so contributions are still welcome!

—The Editor

Reflections on the POAMN Conference
by Your Raving Reporter

The 1998 Annual POAMN Conference brought 82 participants from 31 states and all synods to Baltimore, Maryland, for a great conference on Common Ground: Connecting the Generations. Joined by 21 leaders, participants came from Maine to California and from North Dakota to New Mexico to gain new insight and skills in doing older adult ministry in the Presbyterian Church, (U.S.A.)

Highlights of the Conference:

The stimulating and challenging keynote addresses by Barbara Ann Keely.

The worship services led by Carroll Jenkins, retired synod executive, Synod of Mid-Atlantic.

The fantastic planning by the POAMN Executive Committee, and the efficient hosting by Baltimore.

The use of new hymnbooks, Our Growing Years: a hymnal, and the presence of Ray Inscoc, Director of the new hymnal for older persons.

The song leaders Roy Knight and Elizabeth Day who lifted our spirits with their "Day And Knight."

The encouraging words of our Associate for Older Adult Ministry, Miriam Dunson, calling us to be confident that the Office on Older Adult Ministry in Louisville is in good shape.

The engaging words of Bob Elliott, volunteer Assistant/Consultant for Fundraising in the Office of Older Adult Ministry, encouraging us to support the publication of the Older Adult Issues Series. Although progress is being made, raising money for older adult ministry to raise its own money is like asking guards at Fort Knox to take enough gold to pay for the printing.

An award made by Miriam Dunson to Richard L. Morgan, editor of AGENDA, for successfully raising over 10,000 readers.

The ever presence of Bill Guilford, Linda MacDonald, Donna Coffman, Bev Greer, Jan McGilliard, and married Marcia Richards, all of whom seemed to be everywhere at the same time, seeing that thin.

The informative tour of Glen Meadow's Retirement Community, and the inspiring work of Chapel Hill. The Korean Dancers at the banquet.

The words of appreciation to retiring president, Jan McGilliard, for a job well done, and prayers for the future.

POAMN President's Page by Kathy Westmoreland

As I write this column I am at Stony Point, one of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) conference centers in New York. I am here to represent POAMN and interpret our work to the Congregational Ministries Division of the General Assembly Council. This group has oversight of our organization and others like it. It has been educational and informative for me as I observe and interact with representatives from other reporting organizations.

I was proud to share with them not only our past and present success but also to relate to them our future hopes and dreams as well. I want to share some of those hopes and dreams with you. Some of these have come from our annual conference and some from the POAMN Executive Committee as we have brainstormed about the future of the Network. These hopes and dreams include:

a distinct member benefit (suggestions include a newsletter or Web site)
an ecumenical conference on Older Adult Ministry
ways to celebrate 1999 as the U. N. International Year of Older Persons (check out the Older Adult Week Planning Packet available from the Presbyterian Distribution Service, free of charge, as a place for you to start!)
expand our racial ethnic diversity
partner with other organizations in the PC(USA) for some shared programming

I am excited about the potential growth in POAMN. I want to personally thank outgoing President Jan McGilliard for leaving behind a strong and progressive organization. I would ask you to pray for the Executive Committee regularly and share with us your ideas for growing POAMN. It is a privilege to serve as President and I look forward to joyfully serving Christ's Church with you.

Peace,
Kathy Barlow Westmoreland

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Presbyterian Retirement Communities Lend a Helping Hand by David Fulcher, Presbyterian Association of Homes and Services for the Aging

Searching out the right retirement community is often a difficult task. It becomes even more challenging when the new home you are looking for happens to be in another state. The Presbyterian Church is blessed to have over 350 retirement communities nationwide which are in some way affiliated with the church. The communities range in size from small apartments connected to churches, to large campuses consisting of independent apartments, assisted living, skilled nursing, and home health services.

The Presbyterian Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (PAHSA) is the formal connection for these retirement homes to exchange ideas, develop leadership skills, offer programs, and encourage a ministry in the teachings and principles of Jesus Christ.

Currently the Association has 150 members who collectively serve over 60,000 individuals. Today the Association offers website (www.pahsa.org) which puts people in touch with all 350 homes across the country. Valuable resource information is also available for people interested in issues facing older adults.

Roger Myers, President of PAHSA, has said, "In spite of our differences, we are all non-profit, faith-based organizations. Most importantly, we are all related in some way to the Presbyterian Church, sharing common traditions, ministries of compassion, and commitment to care for older adults.

The Web site is only one way to get information. The Association also has a directory of Presbyterian affiliate retirement communities available. You can contact David Fulcher at the Association for additional information or to request a directory. (1-800-720-74884)

Gleanings From the 1997 Presbyterian Panel on Older Adult Ministry

In November 1997 the Presbyterian Panel surveyed 764 members, 835 elders, and 1,199 clergy (2,798 persons) regarding older adult ministry. Some of the significant results for

our ministry as presented by the Panel, administered by John P. Marcum, are the following:

Descriptive terms used for older persons were: living independently, active in church, wise in ways of the world, and set in their ways.

The terms most used to describe older persons were: elderly, older adult, senior. Terms to avoid were old person, golden ager.

Presbyterians viewed older adults in their church positively. 100% perceived them as "valuable resources."

80% of pastors and 78% of elders perceived that older adults needed specified ministries.

It was also very important to provide support groups for older adults in transition.

A majority felt it would be "helpful" or "very helpful" for their congregations for the PC(USA) to produce a curriculum designed specifically for older adults.

Three in every ten pastors (30%) report that their congregations have a paid staff person whose responsibility specifically includes ministry to older adult members.

Ministries with, by, and for older adults are crucial to the future of the church (85% of members, 87% of elders, and 92% of clergy agreed or strongly agreed).

The Panel also indicated that older adult ministries grew from 1988 to 1997, especially in regard to transportation needs, ministry to frail elderly, and volunteer matching.

Resources For the International Year of Older Persons

The two best resources are:

1. "Toward a Society for All Ages." : In celebration of the 1999 U. N. International Year of Older Persons, "Toward a Society for All Ages." This FREE 26-page packet includes: Guidelines for Planning Events Throughout the Year; Older Adults Week (May 2–8); Organizing and Planning Suggestions for a Celebrative Worship Service; Program Ideas; Intergenerational Activities; Resources. Available from the Presbyterian Distribution Service in Louisville, Ky. (Tel. 1-800-524-2612, Order No. 70250-99-709.) (Part X of this Packet contains the General Assembly Resolution on the International Year of Older Persons.)

2. "The Older Adult: A Resource for the Church." . Compiled by Richard H. Gentzler, Jr. Available from Office of Adult Ministries, General Board of Discipleship, The United Methodist Church, Box 840, Nashville, TN 37202-0840. Tel. (615) 340-7071.

Other Key Resources

Susanne S. Paul and James A. Paul,

Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994.

With the age structure of the world's population changing fast, the "revolution of long life" is already a reality, posing tremendous challenges to societies around the world. *Humanity Comes of Age* presents a detailed and informed analysis of the situation which the church must address in its ministry with older persons.

Excellent Books on Older Adult Ministry in Local Congregations

Dosia Carlson, *Ministry to the Older Adult*, the Alban Institute, 1997.

Richard H. Gentzler Jr. and Donald F. Clingan, *Ministry to the Older Adult*, Discipleship Resources, 1996.

Carroll Saussy, *Helpful Books on Understanding Aging*, Augsburg Press, 1998.

Harriet Kerr Swenson,
Paulist Press, 1994.

Helpful Books on Understanding Aging

Thomas R. Cole and Mary G. Winkler, *Helpful Books on Understanding Aging*, Oxford University Press, 1994.

Joan Lukens, Editor.
Morehouse Press, 1994.

Richard L. Morgan,
Upper Room Books, 1990.

Editor's Note: The Presbytery of Western North Carolina will hold a Learning Event on March 9, 1999, at First Presbyterian Church, Morganton, N.C., with seven learning centers focused on the International Year of Older Persons. (For further information contact Richard L. Morgan, First Presbyterian Church, 100 Silvercreek Road, Morganton, NC 28655 (e-mail: rmorgan@hci.net).

Book of the Quarter

Read Jimmy Carter's neat little book, *Book of the Quarter*, published by the Ballantine Publishing Company, 1998. Beautifully written by one of our "ageless mentors." Jimmy Carter writes about: The Fear of Aging, How Times Have Changed, Looking Ahead: The Impending Crisis; Family Accommodations We Have Made; Planning for Retirement; Good Health for the Elderly; Seventy, Going on Eighty; Facing the End; What Is Successful Aging?; Great Things for Ourselves; Seniors Can Do Great Things for Others; Some Remarkable Old People; A Successful Life; Some Things Are More Important. What's your appetite? A wonderful book for any older person, or those working with/for older persons. President Carter closes with these words, "You are old when regrets take the place of dreams." Read this book. You won't regret it, and it'll preserve your dreams.

Upcoming Conferences

May 10-14 **Skills in Older Adult Ministry**
Montreat, N.C. **Toward a Church for All Ages:
Developing Skills for Connecting the Generations**

Keynote Speaker: Marty Richards, Seattle, Wash. Social worker and teacher for over 30 years. Chair of Forum on Religion, Spirituality, and Aging of ASA.

Worship Leader: Joy White Pruetz, Gainesville, Ga.

For further information, call 1-800-572-2257. Because of unforeseen difficulties, the brochures are a little late being mailed out, so mark these dates on your calendars, wait for the arrival of the brochures, and register for this outstanding conference for leaders in older adult ministry!

October 11-15
Montreat, N.C.

**Older Adult Conference:
Seeking Directions at the Crossroads**

Keynote Speaker: James W. Ellor, Wheaton, Ill. Professor, Department of Human Services, National-Louis University.

Worship Leader: Juan Trevino

For further information, call 1-800-572-2257. Begin now to gather names of persons in your congregation who would like to spend these days at Montreat when the leaves are at their peak, and to participate in educational, inspirational, and entertaining events. Load up the van or charter a bus, and be a part of this exceptional and fun-loving conference.

April 22 Philadelphia Presbytery Older Adult Conference
at Chestnut Hill Presbyterian Church
Finding Your Voice/ Telling Your Story

Keynoter: Richard L. Morgan