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**Interim Editor**

Marvin Simmers

**Publisher**

Miriam Dunson  
Associate

Older Adult Ministries

Phone Toll Free:

888-728-7228 Ext. 5487

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# AGEnda

Number 103

## Care, Cure, Being There

By Rev. Thomas F. Mainor

Psalm 38; John 11:1-45

Martha's sorrowful words, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died," give voice to a depth of feeling we share when illness and death face us. We need someone with us whom we care about, who cares enough to drop everything, to wipe our brow, hold our hand—to be with us in loneliness and pain. When actor, Gregory Peck died recently, it was reported that his wife, Veronique, went to his bedside at 4 a.m., *held his hand, and he looked at her and closed his eyes and was gone.* Sometimes the need is simply to be there!



Thomas F. Mainor

Jesus' own tears flowed because of the loss of his friend. He wept at the suffering of Mary and Martha, over what death too soon takes away. "See how he loved him," they said. Perhaps Jesus wept, too, because he knew that he was back in dangerous territory. Jesus faced not only the death of Lazarus, but his own.

**"If only you'd been here . . ."** In his book *Out of Solitude*, the late Henri Nouwen made an important observation.

In a community like ours, we have put all the emphasis on cure. We want to be professional: heal the sick. . . nevertheless, the temptation is that we use our expertise to keep a safe distance from that which really matters and forget that in the end cure without care is more harmful than helpful.

When we honestly ask ourselves which persons in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not-knowing, not-curing, not-healing, and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is the friend who cares.<sup>1</sup>

Psalm 38 picks up the powerful emotional trauma that comes with pain and isolation. The words could reflect the suffering of Job, the woman in the crowd reaching to touch Jesus, or the deranged man found wandering among the tombs and pigs in a 'pork-dry' state—each speaking from experience:

. . . There is *no soundness* in my flesh  
because of thy indignation;  
There is *no health* in my bones  
because of my sin.  
. . . I am utterly bowed down and prostrate;  
all day long I go about mourning.  
*Searing pain fills my innards;*  
*there is no health in my body.*  
I am utterly spent and crushed;  
I groan because of the tumult of my heart.  
. . . my longing is known to thee . . .

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## Care, Cure...Continued

my sighing not hidden . . . my heart throbs . . .  
 strength fails me . . .  
 the light of my eyes—it also has gone . . .  
 Friends and companions stand aloof  
 from my plague,  
 Do not forsake me, O Lord!  
 . . . Make haste to help me, O Lord of my salvation!  
 (Italics added)

**Summoned to be there** by family or friend's overwhelming illness or tragedy, we may ask, who am I that I should go? what can I offer?

**"Lord, if only you had been here!"** We have but to look at healthcare professionals, overwhelmed with the excruciating details of illness, the array of new knowledge reflected in modern medicine, to know that far more is needed. Dr. Paul Brand tells of his own sense of inadequacy in the face of suffering. **If only you'd been here . . .** Doctor Brand describes an intense two hours with a Mrs. Twigg.

Pain strikes like an earthquake, with crushing suddenness and devastation. A woman feels a small lump in her breast, and her sexual identity begins to crumble. A child is stillborn, and the mother wails in anguish . . . a young boy is thrown through the windshield of a car, permanently scarring his face. His memory flickers on and off like a faulty switch -- doctors, ever cautious, can't offer much hope.

When suffering strikes, those of us standing close by are flattened by shock. We fight back the lumps in our throats, march resolutely to the hospital for visits, mumble a few cheerful words, perhaps look up articles on what to say to the grieving.

But when I ask patients and their families, "Who helped you in your suffering?" I hear a strange, imprecise answer. The person described rarely has smooth answers and a winsome, effervescent personality. It is someone quiet, understanding, who listens more than talks, who does not judge or even offer much advice. "A sense of presence." "Someone there when needed . . ." A hand to hold, an understanding, bewildered hug. A shared lump in the throat.<sup>2</sup>

He was attempting to staunch the flow of blood from an artery in the back of her throat, holding on, waiting for the surgical team to get there.

Sometimes I, as a member of Christ's Body, feel as if I am back in the room with Mrs. Twigg. All my parts—bone, muscle, blood, brain—collaborate beautifully to allow me to stave off certain death in my patient. Yet I must also fend off a sense of helpless futility. The most I can do is dam the flow of blood for a short while, delay

ing the further invasion of her terminal cancer. I wish, instead, for a miracle.<sup>3</sup>

Reflecting his own Christian faith, Brand said,

The life of the body—ours, a loved one—is such a revered and sacred gift that we often go to any means to continue that life. When all attempts for a "technological fix" appear powerless, if not before, it is then we turn to God for a decisive "religious" solution, seeking, offering healing prayer as an answer to the problems of suffering and death. If we are wise, we do these in tandem—early and often. Yet, eventually, we lose.

As we cope with serious illness, or the death of a loved one, the most profound of miracles may be our discovery of the strength to move through *the valley of the shadow*. A caring and compassionate presence of friends, colleagues, family, a loving community of faith, provide needed inner strength.

**"Lord, if only you had been here!"** Those who love and care for one another as God loves us in Christ, already have necessary tools to be partners in a healing regimen that brings together God's love with medicine and miracles. We have partnerships with the health professions that merge technical competence with care and compassion. Cure may not come, but a caring, healing presence is essential to comfort and compassion.

There are no neat, easy answers, but we can provide the supportive context in which to seek healing, or comfort. Importantly, we are properly part of health care teams that daily make the rounds, stopping the bleeding wounds and emotional fractures. We extend a hand, a healing touch, providing a comforting presence, lifting the overwhelming sense of loneliness, sharing the therapy of the Word. Mysteries of faith and prayers of healing and hope are both for cared for and caregiver.

**Where is God?** With an amazing number of gifts of divine love available, in a critical respect, we are God's presence. God is also there in skilled health professionals, family and friends. God is there through

. . . those who, instead of giving advice or suggest cures, choose rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand . . . who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not-knowing, not-curing, not-healing, and face with us the reality of our powerlessness. . .<sup>4</sup>

Don't just say something! Be there! Be there with heart, hands, and compassion.

## Care, Cure...Continued

**Jesus wept**—for his friend and over Jerusalem. He shouted into the darkness of the tomb where Lazarus lay. Perhaps he screamed into the darkness with every ounce of strength, a scream that continues to echo across twenty centuries. One that even awakens the dead. "Don't be afraid; I go before you always. Come, follow me, and I will give you rest." ". . . I am with you, even to the end of the age."

<sup>1</sup>H. Nouwen, *Out of Solitude*, Quoted by Bernie S. Siegel, M.D., in *Love, Medicine & Miracles*, Harper and Row, 1988, p.x.

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, Zondervan Press, © 1980 by Paul Brand, pp. 203-204

<sup>3</sup>*ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup>Henri Nouwen in Siegel, *Op Cit*

*The Reverend Thomas Mainor, M. Div is now retired and living in Williamsburg, VA. He was Pastor from 1995-2002 to Shady Grove Presbyterian Church, Memphis; Chair of the Pastoral Care Committee of Memphis Presbytery; President, Memphis Consortium on Biomedical Ethics. He is a consultant for the PCUSA Office of Helath Ministries, a member of the Presbyterian Health Network leadership team, works in Memphis with the Deaconess Parish Nurse training of Methodist/LeBonheur's Community Health Outreach of the Partnership for Women's and Children's Health. He has served locally as adjunct faculty at Memphis Thological Seminary in the area of Health Ministry and the Church.*

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## Good News For Older Adult Ministries

*By Marvin Simmers*

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta sent an overture the 215th General Assembly, requesting that the Assembly reaffirm its commitment to older adult ministry by:

1. Assuring the continuation of the Office on Older Adult Ministries with sufficient budget and staff to meet the growing needs of the rapidly increasing numbers of older adults in the church and in society, and by

2. Establishing a Task Force on Older Adult Ministries to review the progress that has been made in older adult ministries in the PC(USA) during the past decades, to study the current and growing needs of older adults, and to develop a plan to move forward to endorse, enhance, and support the quality of life for the increasing number of aging members of our denomination.

The General Assembly approved the two recommendations by a wide margin, and the Task Force is being formed. As the results of the work of the Task Force are available, we will attempt to keep the subscribers to AGenda fully informed. We urge you to keep the Task Force members in your prayers.

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

*By Margaret Suttle*



The loss of the spaceship Columbia and its seven crew members in February, 2003 is a dramatic reminder of the uncertainty of life. Those seven and countless others had high hopes for the success of the mission and a video tape recently made public revealed what the crew anticipated when they returned to earth. There was no way to know that they would perish only minutes from their scheduled landing. Each of those astronauts was living with anticipation for tomorrow and the tomorrows to come. Such anticipation is not unlike that which we all experience.

When we are young, we anticipate adulthood, families, and careers. As we grow older our anticipation might include changes in lifestyles, retirement/redirection, travel, and having more time to spend with family and friends. We look to the future, anticipating the best. Then, when least expected, personal health issues or those of a family member or friend remind us of the uncertainty of life. People often look to the church for comfort and for both practical and spiritual direction. What do we have to offer? How can we come alongside in these times of need?

Offering comfort is not as difficult as it may seem. It is the *ministry of presence*—going to one in need, listening, holding a hand, praying, being available. It is not a sharing of great wisdom, but being available to share a person's pain or distress.

A story is told about a little girl whose parents sent her to the store on a simple errand that should have taken no more than twenty minutes. When she didn't come right back, and twenty minutes stretched into thirty, then into forty, her parents were worried about her safety. Imagine their relief and annoyance when the little girl arrived after being gone almost an hour!

"Where have you been? Didn't you know your mother and I would be worried?" asked her father.

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## President's Corner Continued

"Yes," said the child, "but on the way to the store I met Janie. Her doll had a broken arm, so I stopped to cry with her for a while. I didn't think you would mind." The little girl knew the value of *the ministry of presence*.

Organizing a separate health ministry or adding a health component to an existing older adult ministry program is one way of providing practical direction.

Many presbyteries and local congregations have health ministries equipped with resources and support. Many churches have added parish nurses to their staffs to assist with the growing needs of their aging members. To get complete information on health ministries, go to [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org), click on Search PCUSA.org and type in *health ministries*.

At the memorial service for the astronauts at Johnson Space Center, February 4, US Navy Chaplain Captain Gene Theiot concluded with this prayer: "Almighty Father, strong to save, thank you for honoring us with your presence at this celebration of remembrance. To know you in time of joy and success is a wonderful blessing for which we are truly grateful. Yet, to experience you in times of tragedy and sorrow, to experience you when everything goes wrong and all our best efforts are not enough, to experience you then, is to us life and our only reliable hope."

Captain Theiot, in his prayer, offered spiritual direction for those who were grieving. He spoke of the reality of God's presence as a person's only hope in times of tragedy. It is hope that the Church of Jesus Christ has to offer to those who are afflicted, to those whose health is failing, *when everything goes wrong and all our best efforts are not enough*.

Allow me to share a personal experience. Last fall I heard the words, "You have cancer," for the second time in my life. All of my bright plans for ministry, to visit a brand new grandson, to explore the beautiful northern California countryside, were blurred by those three words. The tomorrows I had anticipated now looked very different, yet I still had hope! In a human sense, I had hope in the medical community and the treatment I would receive, but in a divine sense, I knew the reality of God's presence. John Calvin said: "The word 'hope' I take for faith; and indeed hope is nothing else but the constancy of faith." Hope is the belief in the Triune God, both in times of joy and when everything goes wrong. The church offers comfort and practical support, but its greatest offering is HOPE.

Faithfully  
Margaret Suttle

## Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers of Fayetteville

By Carol Ashton

"A few years ago Carol (Ashton) came to our church to explain Interfaith Caregivers to our congregation. It seemed like a perfect fit for me. I was blessed to be paired up with Anna, an 80-something delight of a lady. Our visits together were so rewarding, whether it be a trip to the doctor's office or a quick shopping to a local grocery store. Anna never complained about anything and always had a smile on her face when she came out of her house to greet me. Anna passed away recently and I miss her so much. I just wanted to thank IVCF (Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers of Fayette, Inc.) for bringing us together. I know that Anna is surely in heaven now and pray that she is watching over all of us."

This is but one of the many notes we receive from volunteers who step out in faith, and care for an elderly person in the community. Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers of Fayette, Inc. had its beginnings in 1991. Funded by the Redstone Presbytery of Pennsylvania, a three-year pilot program, Senior Ministries, was initiated by the Trinity United Presbyterian Church in Uniontown, Pa. under the leadership of the pastor, the Reverend Dr. John K. Sharp. Fayette County, in Southwestern Pennsylvania, is second in the nation, percentage-wise, in the number of elderly residents; some 32,000 of its citizens are sixty-five years and older.

The mission field was very clear to the leadership of the church. At the end of three years, faced with the unmet needs of the community, and the success of the many volunteers from Trinity Church, a coalition of clergy and social services agencies gathered to explore possibilities for continuing this vital ministry. Senior Ministries became Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers of Fayetteville (IVCF), and was incorporated in 1993 as a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization.

The beauty of this mission work lies in the benefits given to the volunteers as they reach out to older adults in need. IVCF volunteers log more than 1,500 hours of service each year by providing transportation for medical purposes, grocery shopping, respite for caregivers, telephone reassurance, visiting, minor home repairs, banking/check writing, etc. Volunteers come from more than one hundred different congregations of faith, and willingly serve anyone in need. The churches are working together to care for the community.

Years ago I received a call from an elderly man who requested telephone reassurance. He said to me, "Carol, I want you to call me each morning, I

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**Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers Continued**

don't want to talk, I just want to know that I did not die during the night." One of the greatest fears of older adults who live alone, without sufficient family support, is that they might die during the night and no one would know. When we ask persons to consider volunteering we are asking for their most valuable asset: time. We are all called to serve, and the rewards are immeasurable. One new IVCF board member transported an elderly man to a medical appointment. Upon completing the mission, he said, "This man gave more to me than anyone else. I was moved by the experience and realize how fortunate I am to have my family."

If your congregation is interested in such a mission literally at your doorstep, IVCF will be glad to share with you how you might develop such a program. You may contact Carol Ashton by calling 724-438-0709, or by e-mail at [ivcf@hhs.net](mailto:ivcf@hhs.net).

*(Carol Ashton is the Executive Director of IVCF)*

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**Mirror Image**

*By Eddy Nichols Tullar*

Pictures propped on tables tell our story  
of family, weddings, birth, history.  
One looks back at me today.  
I see my mother's face in mine,  
And one daughter mirrors both.

She worked so hard, my Scottish mum.  
Her house was her dominion.  
Mum kept it shining, and oh, so clean.  
She baked and good smells floated,  
To welcome each one coming in the door.

She was a quiet woman, who knitted  
at the end of a weary day.  
I remember mittens, socks and scarves  
that kept me warm on frosty days  
During our mid-western cold winters.

Tonight, as the music of Mozart plays  
I sit and knit a scarf for a friend, reminiscing,  
remembering how she taught me to knit and purl  
when I was a wee one of four or five,  
And I smile with pleasure at the memory.

For this past weekend I had the joy  
of teaching two granddaughters to knit.  
They struggled with the slender needles,  
clumsily attempting to turn the yarn  
With fingers not used to so small a loop.

History repeats itself in the kindest, nicest ways  
and I am grateful for a mother who  
taught me  
To be diligent, thrifty, work hard and enjoy.  
To rest at the end of the day's chores;  
And I smile as the image in the mirror.

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**The Old Woman's Cry**

Before you cried  
I saw you here  
With the love of your life  
Now - gone forever  
As we know it.

I saw you cry  
I saw you stroke his head  
I saw you tenderly touch his chest.

And each time crying  
Then your lips would quiver  
And the sound would vibrate-  
The way an adult does with  
Putting fingers to the lips  
As the lips vibrate.

You cried  
A tired cry  
A wandering cry  
A slow cry  
An aching cry.

Among us? you were alone in your tears.

\*upon losing her mate of 70 years Delores Spielman, May 1995 (Delores is chaplain at Davis Regional Medical Center, Mooresville, North Carolina. This poem was written after she sat with this couple as the husband died.)

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**Olding—70**

*By Sage Mansfield*

The older I get  
the colder the nights  
Winter days longer

The fewer my friends  
I cannot make new ones fast enough  
to replace the ones who die

Like a caterpillar on a bare branch  
I yearn for death's cocoon  
till I can soar free  
a resurrected butterfly

But I want to see  
one more devil-dare crocus  
one more robin dynasty  
feel high noon in July  
outlive my contemporaries

Be the oldest dinosaur alive

Sage Mansfield lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She has contributed poetry to Presbyterian Publications, *Monday Morning* and *The Fryer Pan*.

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## Oral History Project Preserves History, Memories and Build Bridges

*By Emily Howald*

When we acquire senior citizen status, we know firsthand about important periods in our country's history--we've lived through them! Studying about history in school is nothing like living through the events. We have important information to share with our family, our church, and our community. Our personal life history is important to share, too, because by this age, we have acquired wisdom--sometimes the hard way--that might be useful to others. Many of us have also learned the importance of faith throughout life's journey.

If you have reached your 70s or 80s, you have lived through the Great American Depression of the 1930s, World War II, the Civil Rights Movement, and many other important events in the nation's and world's history. Are you in your 60s and newer to senior status? Nevertheless, you lived through most of this history, too.

You've seen difficult times and you know about "making do." You have lived through sorrowful times, including the loss of loved ones, perhaps starting with World War II. Maybe it was faith that sustained you.

You're part of a very important group in America--a group that lived a part of our country's history that has experienced more change than any other period of our nation's life. Others your age--whatever their race, heritage, or religious affiliation, are part of this group, too. We have so much in common, even if our backgrounds are diverse in many ways. The Oral History Project in Kankakee, Illinois, designed as an interracial project, was based on this premise: Seniors in America, regardless of race or heritage, have lived through many similar life experiences. Recalling these experiences together could help build bridges to each other, especially if those who participate are people of faith who have respect for all. A book based on these shared experiences would also enable the seniors' knowledge and acquired wisdom to be passed on to others.

When Reverend Scott Hill, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Kankakee, was approached about this project, he commented, "I'm a person who likes to build bridges." Thus he agreed for his church to participate.

With the encouragement of their pastor, four First Presbyterian members agreed to take part in this Oral History Project that would also include members of Asbury United Methodist Church and two of the community's Black churches--Second Baptist and Caldwell Chapel A.M.E. Zion.

The participants were informed that a spiral-bound book would be produced from their tape recorded responses to 10 questions, including questions about their childhood and about the most important historical events in their lifetime. Other questions would enable them to pass on what they had learned, and to discuss how they had made a difference in their communities. This important question was also included: "How has your faith been important in your life?"

The First Presbyterian participants in this project were Jim and Ruth Roorda, Elva Ruth Alexander, and Richard Logan. Like their pastor, they consistently demonstrated that they were excellent bridge-builders. This project required of them, and the other participants, a willingness to listen genuinely to, and respect the life experiences of others, and to trust them to share their own important life experiences. That is the way real bridges are built and bonds are established between people.

Sixteen persons took part in this project. They were divided into two groups, with at least one participant from each church in each group. Two project co-leaders--one from Asbury and the other from Second Baptist--assisted the project leader with the tape recording sessions, which were conducted at those two churches, beginning in July 2002.

The participants were asked to listen to one another without interruption while the tape recorder was on. The project was completed in late November, and as Jim Roorda stated, "I believe we were a group of good listeners."

Jim went on to state: "Although there were differences in our backgrounds, we had all lived through the Depression in the 1930s and through individual difficult experiences of our own. We could all identify with whoever was talking. Listening to the accounts of the things that shaped us into who we are really helped us get better acquainted with each other and maybe even with ourselves. . . I believe the sixteen of us have made some difference in each other's lives, in the sharing of our memories and present day thoughts as we got to know each other better."

In response to the question about the most important historical events in their lifetime, those who participated not only shared their similar experiences, such as rationing during World War II. They also shared experiences that were very different. Some of the Black participants talked about the Civil Rights Movement. They shared memories and feelings about the 1950s and '60s, when Black citizens in the South gained civil rights as a result of the Montgomery bus boycott, marches, freedom

### Oral History Continued

rides, lunch counter sit-ins, voter registration campaigns, and legal action. One participant recalled friends who took part in the Freedom Rides. Others discussed the contributions of Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. One commented simply, but eloquently, about Dr. King, "Well, he went through some tough times, Dr. King, to try to make things better for everybody, you know...Not just for Blacks, for whites-whatever color they might be, you know. We're all in one nation."

Discussing their growing-up days, all recalled many of the same household items that were once a very important part of everyday life: butter churns, kerosene lamps, and wood-burning cook stoves. All agreed that they don't miss these items now. As one aptly put it, "They make good antiques!"

In response to one of the final questions, these seniors described how they felt they had made a difference in the lives of others and in their communities. Through their sharing and listening, they learned even more about each other, about the significant contributions each had made to others during his or her life.

The memories that the participants shared during the group sessions not only created a bond among them, but also joined them together in a journey toward genuine, mutual understanding they will always remember. Genuine understanding always makes a difference, and builds bridges. As one participant so accurately commented when answering one of the oral history questions: "If I understand you, you'll understand me; we've got it made..."

Coming from very diverse backgrounds, but all people of strong faith, the participants reached out to each other. In the process they shared some information with each other they might not even have shared with friends or family!

Though there were two separate groups for taping, the groups met together for two celebrations. Caldwell Chapel hosted a dinner near the end of the taping process. At the final celebration, held at First Presbyterian, each participant received a copy of the 253-page project book, *Through Our Eyes: Sharing Our Lives*.

The book included photos and illustrations, one of which was a 1924 Dodge drawn by

Eric Enzman, a seven-year-old First Presbyterian youngster. Several children from Second Baptist, along with a deacon from that congregation, also contributed excellent illustrations.

This oral history book the participants produced together, with help from the illustrators, has enabled them to pass their memories on to their children, grandchildren, and others they cherish in the younger generations, as well as to members of their churches. The book from this project also enabled Rev. Scott Hill to develop an Affirmation of Faith as a responsive reading for his congregation on the Sunday in February that he focused the service on the Oral History Project. He compiled the answers the participants had given in response to the question about their faith, used these as quotes, and he and the congregation alternated reading them. The Affirmation concluded with these five quotes that demonstrate the strong faith these participants shared:

\*My faith has given me the balance needed in my life.

\*Faith tells you to overlook the bad and see the good.

\*I believe we are responsible to God, and our faith is the source of our satisfaction.

\*I would judge my faith as a quiet, sunny day-not a bolt of lightning or a roll of thunder.

\*I thank God for His grace and His mercy. He is my All in All.

The Oral History Project participants held a reunion in April of this year at Second Baptist, and each was given a copy of this Affirmation of Faith.

The Oral History Project could be replicated in your community if your church would like to build bridges, too. Or, a variation of this project could be conducted within your own church to preserve the memories, the legacy, and faith of your seniors and to share this information with the rest of your congregation. Or, you may think of other creative variations.

If you would like detailed information about this project, just contact me (the project leader) at (815) 936-1991.

*Ms. Emily Howald attends First Presbyterian Church, Kankakee, Illinois, and served as the project director for the Oral History Project.*



Miriam Dunson

### MUSINGS BY MIRIAM A CALL TO ACTION

In the news recently, there has been much written about three items that touch the lives of older adults. The first one is about cuts in Medicare and Medicaid, the second is about the high cost of prescription drugs, and the third is about state laws concerning how to identify older drivers who no longer have the necessary skills to drive their car. These are three crucial issues for us older adults. Our Representatives and Senators in Washington need to hear from us concerning how we experience and how we feel about each of these issues—the cuts in Medicare and Medicaid, the high costs not only of prescriptions but of medical care as a whole, and the inappropriateness of setting limitations on older drivers based solely on our chronological age.

The House of Representatives as well as the Senate have come up with separate plans for solving the prescription issue. However, they at this point have not been able to agree on how to consolidate the two plans in ways that would be helpful to all older adults. They need to hear from us as to how we feel about these issues. We also need to let them know our stand concerning basing driving ability solely on chronological age.

You can call your representative or senator and leave a message on all three issues. You will not

talk with the person himself/herself, but you will speak with a person who will take down your name and address, and notes on your concerns. You will then get a letter from the senator or representative thanking you for your comments, and promising that they will be taken into consideration.

This really works. I heard Bill Frist, who chairs the joint Congressional Committee on the prescription matter, actually read a letter he received from an older woman explaining her drastic situation of being on a fixed income, depending upon her medicines in order to function, and not being able to afford to pay the cost.

I called a congressman the other day and said that there are over 2,000,000 Presbyterians in the United States, and more than one-third of them are over sixty-five, and are dedicated voters. I told him that I work with older adults on the national staff, and want him to vote for what would be best for all older adults in all three of these issues. I further stated that the lives of older adults are directly affected by his votes. I further reminded him that the votes of older adults in national and state elections are also affected by how our representatives in Washington vote on these issues.

So, call your senators, call your representatives, and let them know what you think. It really makes a difference in how they vote on issues. Also, encourage your friends and neighbors also to call or write and express their opinions. This is how democracy works, and we might as well use it!

## NEEDED FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

SEND CREATIVE POEMS/PROSE

SUBJECT: *The Congregation:  
A Community for All Ages*

Send articles about  
what your church is doing in  
inter-generational ministry.

Send entries to:

Marvin Simmers  
MarvinSimmers.AOL.Internet

or

1144 Bromley Road  
Avondale Estates GA 30002

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### A NOTE FROM AGENDA EDITOR

Now may be a good time to consider building a more complete older adult ministry section in your church library, since it is prohibitive for an individual to keep up-to-date by purchasing the increasing number of resources available.

Check your local bookstores, websites, and catalogs for resources about aging that are helpful for children, youth, and adults. Some excellent resources are now available for adults who must serve as caregivers for their aging parents.

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See AGENDA  
On-Line



<http://horeb.pcusa.org/olderadults>

## Resources



*Changing Places: A Journey with My Parents into Their Old Age*, by Judy Kramer. New York: Riverhead Books, 2000. \$14.00.

The author, a journalist in the Washington, DC area, gives a candid and poignant account of the last several years of her parents' lives, including her reflections on her life after their passing. This volume offers excellent guidance and support for adults who are caregivers for their parents, and for the parents themselves.

*Love & Survival: 8 Pathways to Intimacy and Health*, by Dean Ornish, M.D. New York: HarperPerennial, 1998. \$14.00.

One of the greatest challenges facing older adults is maintaining a circle of persons who offer friendship and support. Dr. Ornish shares research and anecdotal information about the importance of such friendships for health and vitality in old age. These words on the back cover of the book summarize its message well:

... the real epidemic in modern culture is ... emotional and spiritual heart disease: loneliness, isolation, alienation, and depression. ... Dr. Ornish outlines eight pathways to intimacy and healing that have made a profound difference in his life and the lives of millions of others in turning sadness into happiness, suffering into joy.

*Another Country: Navigating the Emotional Terrain of Our Elders*, by Mary Pipher. New York: Riverhead Books, 1999. \$13.95.

Dr. Pipher relates experiences from clients in her practice as a psychologist and from her own life to help enable young and middle adults have a deeper appreciation for and ability to relate to their aging parents. Dr. Pipher describes strategies that help bridge the gaps that separate the generation of baby boomers from their elders. With respect and realism, Dr. Pipher maps out new ways we can support one another as we share our time, energy, and love.

*The Older the Fiddle, the Better the Tune: The Joys of Reaching a Certain Age*, by Willard Scott and Friends. New York: Hyperion, 2003. \$22.95.

This wonderful little volume contains reflections from a wide variety of older adults, some well known and some known only to their friends and family. Some of the reflections are whimsical and will make you laugh, others are profound and will evoke both deep thoughts and feelings. One of the contributors is Dr. Richard Morgan, former editor of AGenda.

## The 2003 Conference Is Going To Be A Valuable Experience For Anyone Working With Older Adults

Don't miss this opportunity to learn and share with professionals around the country. Register today with the attached form.

### WORKSHOPS

#### 1. THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF OLDER ADULT MINISTRIES

An exciting program for your church! This workshop will give you the opportunity to assess the gifts in your church to match the needs in your church: Needs + Gifts = Older Adult Ministries.

**Max and Bertie Platt**, Tempe, AZ; are charter members of POAMN, and former volunteers for Gift of a Lifetime Program. Max serves as Secretary of Older Adult Concerns and Celebrations Committee of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

#### 2. T'AI CHI CHIH

Learn about a series of 19 slow, gentle movements that provide many physical and emotional benefits.

**Ron Richardson**, Tupelo, MS, is director of pastoral care at North Mississippi Medical Center. He is also clinical director of the North Mississippi Critical Incident Stress Management Team, and chair of the medical ethics committee. He has practiced T'ai Chi Chih for the past four years.

**May Swanson**, Phoenix, AZ; T'ai Chi Chih instructor.

#### 3. FAITH AND HEALTH

What is faith? What is health? What is the connection between faith and health and how can faith assist in the healing process?

**Miriam Dunson**, Louisville, KY, is Associate for Older Adult Ministries in the Congregational Ministries Division, PC(USA). She has been in this position for over 12 years. She is an ordained minister and a member of Northeast Georgia Presbytery. In 1999 she authored two books: *A Very Present Help: Psalm Studies for Older Adults* and *Facing Forward in Older Adult Ministry: Resources for the Congregation*.

#### 4. HOW TO DO A NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN THE CONGREGATION

The purpose and design of conducting a needs assessment in a congregation.

**Miriam Dunson**, Louisville, KY, is Associate for Older Adult Ministries in the Congregational Ministries Division, PC(USA).

### Conference Workshops Continued

#### 5. WHAT DO "PROAMS" DO?

Share new ideas on how to encourage congregations to begin and enhance their older adult programs with opportunities to discuss ways to further their growing ministry. Others who are interested are also welcomed to attend.

**Miriam Dunson**, Louisville, KY, is Associate for Older Adult Ministries in the Congregational Ministries Division, PC(USA).

#### 6. AGING WITH VISION

Explore the joys and sorrows of the later years by highlighting the following topics: becoming an older adult, life review, refocusing the past, forgiveness, facing mortality, grief work, leaving a legacy, mentoring, and healing the world.

**Cinny Poppen and Roger Golden**, Nashville, TN, were recently certified as workshop leaders by the Spiritual Eldering Institute in Boulder, CO. They are members of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Nashville where Roger is on staff as Plant Operations Manager. Cindy is a tutor at the Hermitage Learning Center serving students in private and public schools. Roger is an ordained minister and studied at the Gerontological Pastoral Care Institute in St. Paul and trained as a spiritual director while attending seminary.

#### 7. GOOD GRIEF

A Christian has neither immunity nor exemption for human grief. Learn how to handle it. Thinking it through in advance may be one of the most constructive experiences of your life.

**Bill Guilford**, Oklahoma City, OK is an ordained Presbyterian minister serving as Parish Associate for Older Adults at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Oklahoma City. Bill has a background in religious and educational programming and has worked at several television stations. He has also directed and produced several religious dramas. He has worked in older adult ministries for the past 15 years.

#### 8. EXPERIENCING READERS THEATRE

Readers theatre is a Special Art Form designed to inform, enlighten, and entertain an audience. Come and have some great fun!

**Bill Guilford**, Oklahoma City, OK is an ordained Presbyterian minister serving as Parish Associate for Older Adults at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Oklahoma City.

#### 9. ENCIRCLING CARE—PC(USA) Care Team Model

Look at the ways in which Older Adult Ministries can work with Health Ministries to intersect and form a circle of care and concern.

**Patricia K. Gleich**, Louisville, KY, is an Associate, in the Office of Health Ministries PC(USA). She has been involved in both direct

care program administration in the fields of public and mental health, health education, and human rights.

#### 10. OLDER ADULT MINISTRIES IN ANY SIZE CHURCH

This workshop will explore older adult ministries in three different size churches, small, medium and large.

**Beth Ann Force**, Bryn Mawr, PA, **Pat Baker**, Stone Mountain, GA and **Melanie Dyce Johnson**, Hysham, MT

#### 11. NATIVE AMERICAN SPIRITUALITY

This workshop will focus on selected aspects of Native American Spirituality including the breadth and depth of native sacred traditions, noting central features of the indigenous experience in both the preliterate and literate eras. The characteristics of native spirituality that will be emphasized are the spiritual world, animism, sacrifice, taboos, ceremonies, rituals, visions, leadership, death and afterlife. Selected tribal practices will be presented as time permits.

**Larry Norris**, Tempe, AZ, is professor of religious studies at Cook College and Theological School where he has been for the past 20 years. He is an ordained United Methodist Elder in the Desert Southwest Conference of the UMC. He is a national workshop leader on Native American history, beliefs, practices, and cross cultural sensitivity.

#### 12. HOW A CHURCH TAKES CARE OF FAMILY CAREGIVERS

Presented in this workshop will be information on how to successfully start and maintain support groups in your church. Specific models will include support groups for family caregivers and grandparents raising grandchildren. Discussion will also include incorporating these support groups in the mission/outreach program of your church.

**Pat Baker**, Stone Mountain, GA, is a consultant in the field of services and programs for older adults. She has worked in a variety of public and private sponsored older adult programs for the past 30 years. She is a member of Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Stone Mountain.

#### KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**Martha (Marty) Richards,**  
MSW, LICSW

Author of *Caregiving: Church and Family Together*



Martha Richards

Keynote Address: "Spirituality: Health and Hope and Well-Being," "Keeping the Spirit Alive Through Inter-generational Connections"

**REGISTRATION FORM**

**PRESBYTERIAN OLDER ADULT MINISTRIES NETWORK (POAMN) 2003 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
FIRSTNAME MIDDLE INITIAL LAST NAME

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: (W) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ FAX (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

REPRESENTING (PLEASE SPECIFY)

PRESBYTERY \_\_\_\_\_ SYNOD \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL CHURCH \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ PRESBYTERY REPRESENTATIVE (PROAM)      \_\_\_\_ FIRST TIME PARTICIPANT

**WORKSHOP SELECTION:** (CIRCLE ONE FOR EACH SESSION)

- A- THURSDAY 2:30-4:00 P.M.      #1 #2 #4 #7 #9 #12
- B- FRIDAY 1:00-2:30 P.M.      #5 #6 #9 #10 #11
- C- FRIDAY 3:00- 4:30 P.M.      #2 #3 #6 #8 #12

**PROGRAM FEES:** (includes Wednesday dinner, Thursday lunch and Friday banquet)

MEMBERS	BEFORE SEPT. 10	\$205.00	\$ _____
	AFTER SEPT. 10	\$230.00	_____
NON-MEMBERS	BEFORE SEPT. 10	\$235.00	_____
		\$260.00	_____

DAILY FEE IS \$65.00 I plan to attend \_\_\_Oct. 22, \_\_\_Oct 23, \_\_\_Oct. 24, \_\_\_Oct. 25 \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT RATE \$100.00 FOR ENTIRE CONFERENCE \_\_\_\_\_

\$30.00 DAY RATE \_\_\_Oct. 22, \_\_\_Oct 23, \_\_\_Oct. 24, \_\_\_Oct. 25 \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Registration \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**POAMN MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:**

INDIVIDUAL	\$ 30.00	_____
AFFILIATE	\$ 20.00	_____
ORGANIZATION	\$100.00	_____

**Total Registration and Membership \$** \_\_\_\_\_

I am a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)      Yes\_\_\_      No \_\_\_

If "No," please list your denomination \_\_\_\_\_

I am a lay person\_\_\_      Clergy\_\_\_      Other professional \_\_\_

**Total Enclosed \$**

Please Type or Print Clearly

**Check No./Date** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**SEND REGISTRATION FORM TO:**

**Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**  
**POAMN- SE02006**  
**Section 205**  
**Louisville, KY 40202**

**Name on Charge Card** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Card#** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Type of Card** \_\_\_\_\_ **Expiration Date** \_\_\_\_\_

# PRESBYTERIAN OLDER ADULT MINISTRY NETWORK

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL (Preferred) \_\_\_\_\_

Synod \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery \_\_\_\_\_

Other (Organization) \_\_\_\_\_

- Please Find  \$30 Full Membership  New  Renewal  
 \$20 Affiliate Member  
 \$100 Organizational Member

**Make Checks Payable to:**

POAMN Treasurer  
c/o Rev. Ron Richardson  
2331 Quail Creek Road  
Tupelo MS 38801

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