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would present each item in the order in which it occurred in the Division Report. Betty Bailey was Division B facilitator. He would move for its adoption, seconded from the podium by Executive Council Chairperson Helen Barnhill, and make some comments as to the Division's rationale for that proposal. There would then be opportunity for open discussion from the floor, limited to two minutes per person, timed with a fifteen-second warning.

Mr. Thomas referred delegates to Advance Materials II, which contained all items assigned to the Division, as well as the Division B Report itself. Ten issues would be dealt with in ninety minutes, nine minutes per item.

3. PROPOSAL ON THE AGING

Mr. Thomas cited the sources for this proposal: Advance Materials 11, pp. 103-107; "A Position Statement for the Ministry to the Elderly;" and "A Proposal on the Aging for the Wisconsin Conference and the Eleventh General Synod." The latter two background materials had been incorporated into the proposal before the body.

Mr. Thomas moved for adoption of the proposal as amended. This was seconded, and he noted the extensive study of housing and related issues for the aging covered in the resource materials. The Division had been overwhelming in its support of this proposal, making only the changes indicated in the Division Report.

Curtis Lee, (OHIO), supported the proposal, citing the growing proportion of the elderly in the nation's population.

Walter Anders, (FLA), offered an amendment to this amendment, re: line 25. This was seconded, and it was

77-GS-21a VOTED: The Eleventh General Synod deletes the word "complete" from VII, line 25, Page 106, Advance Materials II.

There was further discussion on the proposal, debate was closed, and it was

77-GS-21 VOTED: The Eleventh General Synod adopts the "Proposal on Aging" as amended.

The Report and Recommendations on the Aging

I. PREFACE

The United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and the Advisory Committee on Aging submit this report, calling for action, as a result of the 10th General Synod's adoption of a resolution on concerns for the Aged. The resolution requested that the Board for Homeland Ministries, "study the whole issue of the needs of the elderly and bring back to the 11th General Synod recommendations for action."

The needs of the elderly have the widespread interest and concern of the United Church of Christ membership. Although this issue came to the attention of the 10th General Synod with little advance work, the needs of the elderly was ranked number eleven in the delegates' priority rating. Nationally, the problems facing the elderly are everywhere receiving increased attention. Further, as an example of the widespread attention this issue is receiving, the agenda of the 1977 General Assembly of the United Na-

tions will include an item with reports and proposals for the continuing UN program on the aging.

It is now time that the United Church of Christ increase its efforts and give the aging issue top attention. The Board for Homeland Ministries and its Advisory Committee on Aging submit the following report and proposal for action with recommendation that a full fledged program with and for the elderly be launched by this Eleventh General Synod.

Report of Work Accomplished

A. A study of present needs of the elderly in American society was made by staff in the UCBHM Division of Health and Welfare. They collected and analyzed many current reports and this is reflected in the body and background material developed for this proposal.

B. Another part of the study was a survey of the U.C.C. conferences with almost 100% response. The results revealed that, 1) more U.C.C. involvement is needed with the concerns of the elderly, 2) that training in meeting the needs of the elderly is wanted by both laity and clergy and, 3) widespread and genuine desire exists among the churches and conferences to become more involved. In addition, a questionnaire was developed by the Division of Health & Welfare for use in local churches. one questionnaire was designed for consciousness-raising of clergy about the needs of their elderly members. The other questionnaire was for distribution to laity and the suggested format was designed to elicit information from the congregation on the needs of the elderly in a particular community. This information could be used as a guide in setting up programs for the elderly.

C. The UCBHM's Division of Health & Welfare convened an Advisory Committee composed of experts in the field of the Aged. The following persons served on that committee:

Reverend Cameron Hall, Garden City, L.I.—Leading Church Statesman; Member, Grey Panthers, National Steering Committee; Consultant, U.N. Headquarters, International Sr. Citizen's Assoc.

Hobart Jackson, Philadelphia Pa.—Former President, Black Caucus on Aging; Administrator, Stephen Smith Homes for the Aging.

Leroy H. Jones, A.C.S.W., Bensenville, Illinois—President, Bensenville Home Society; Executive Board Member, UCC Council for Health & Welfare Services; Delegate to the White House Conf. on Aging.

Professor Robert E. Neale, New York, N.Y.—Professor of Psychiatry & Religion, Union Theological Seminary.

Ollie Randall, New York, N.Y.—Founder and Board Member, National Council on Aging (NCOA); NY Consultant at White House on original Social Security Legislation.

Carlos Rios, New York, N.Y.—Councilman, East Harlem Delegate to White House Conference on Aging.

Reverend Richard E. Merrick, South Britain, Conn.—Representative, Connecticut Conference which in-

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roduced the 10th General Synod Resolution on Aging; Board Member, Corporation for Aging; Pastor, South Britain Church, Southbury, Conn.

Reverend Lawrence Washburn, Peace Dale, Rhode Island—Pastor, Peacedale UCC Church; Corporate Board Member, UCBHM

Lenore Washburn, Peace Dale, Rhode Island—Peacedale UCC Church

Staff Persons, Health & Welfare Division, UCBHM

Jeannette Heinbach, B.A., Bronx, New York—2nd yr. student, Graduate School of Social Service, Fordham University at Lincoln Center, New York

Chenoweth Watson, A.C.S.W.—Secretary, Council for Health & Welfare Services

Helen Webber, M.A.—General Secretary, Health & Welfare Division UCBHM

This committee has been meeting at least once per month since the early Spring of '76 and is responsible for the preparation of this proposal, and supportive background material.

D. A wide circulation of drafts of this proposal was made with requests for comment and input. Groups which have received these drafts include: the Corporate members of the BHM assigned to the H & W Division, the agency administrators of the Section on Aging of the Council for H & W Services, the H & W Commission Chairpersons and various local pastors and laypersons with interest and expertise in this field.

As a result of the extensive consultation the Advisory Committee agreed that the present needs of many elderly persons call for immediate action by the General Synod, every Conference and local church of the United Church of Christ. Recognizing the long history of the work of the churches and their agencies in the field of ministry *to and with* the elderly, we call all members of the U.C.C. to action and advocacy. We must engage ourselves *now* in a direct, viable, supportive "Ministry to the Elderly." The time is right and Christian conscience demands a response.

II. PRESENT STATE OF THE ELDERLY

Proportionately, the fastest growing segment of the American Population and also the group receiving shortest shrift, are Americans over age 65 who now number 22.4 million men and women. At present death rates, the older population is expected to increase by 40% to 31 million by the year 2,000, only 23 years from now. If the present low birth rate continues, these 31 million will be 11.7% of the total United States population of about 262 million. In our churches, approximately one fourth of the U.C.C. membership is now over 65 years of age.

In our highly technological society the needs of the elderly are becoming more acute. Because of the increased mobility of the younger generation and the resultant weakening of family ties older people are often lonely and neglected. They are also discriminated against in terms of employment and imposition of mandatory retirement. The fact these injustices to the elderly in our society continue, reflects the deep-seated prejudices that many persons have toward the process of aging and toward elderly people.

The fears people have of their own possible disability and aging are exacerbated because of the stereotyped attitudes towards the elderly prevalent in the communications media.

Unmet Needs and Problems of the Elderly*

Attitudes

Although a beginning has been made to combat Agism, which is defined as discrimination on the basis of age, we still have far to go. Honoring of mother and father is one of the Ten Commandments, but it is clear our American youth-oriented culture prevents our older citizens from serving the community with their wisdom. Children and youth are not taught respect for the aged and have little opportunity to enjoy life experiences with them.

The media, which has done much to reinforce the public's stereotyping of the aged, should now do more to reduce and expose agism and its results. An increase in the public understanding of the older population is needed. The media has also a role to play in stimulating the consciousness of the elderly themselves with regard to their own sense of worth and power.

Crime Problems

Increasingly elderly people have become the targets of robberies, assaults, fraud and rape. Louis Harris, the pollster, reports that those over 65 fear crime most and rate it as their most serious problem. Thousands of elderly are virtual prisoners in their own homes: self confined victims who fear going out.

Education

The present generation of the elderly grew up during a period of history when even a high school education was a luxury. Since more of the population now look forward to living out their older years, continuing education and retraining for employment and especially voluntary service is of increasing importance.

Health & Nutrition

In 1974 approximately 90 billion dollars were spent for personal health care. About 30% of this amount was spent for older persons. The health care cost per capita for older people was 3 times as much as for young adults. Hospital costs have been rising twice as fast as the cost of living. While Medicare and Medicaid are generally helpful government programs, they are too often inadequately regulated and have led to recent scandals and abuses. There is also inadequate purchase of service systems. As of January, 1977 there has been a 19% increase to the consumer in Medicare costs.

Chronic health problems are more prevalent among older persons. Half of the older population have not seen a dentist for 5 or more years or have never visited a dentist at all.

Title VII of the Older Americans Act, which provides support for nutrition programs still reach only a minority of those who need such service. Inadequate nutrition probably contributes most to causing health problems among the aging.

* Listed alphabetically and not in order of priority.

25% of the elderly require supportive services such as homemaker visits, meals on wheels, geriatric day care centers and innovative programs to reach the lonely and isolated, especially in rural areas, where medical services commonly are limited.

Housing Problem

Many aged live in substandard housing and there is a crucial need for especially designed low and moderate income housing. Older people who wish to remain in their own homes should not be forced out because of reduced income, escalating taxes and inflationary maintenance costs.

60% of substandard housing units are in rural areas and one quarter of these are occupied by older adults.

Income Maintenance

The income of elderly persons living alone or with non-relatives was mostly at the lower end of the income distribution. Half received incomes under \$3,000 while only one in six received more than \$6,000. Social Security does not provide an adequate income level for a majority of the retired and disabled. Supplemental Security Income (SSI), because of variations of individual state policies, often results in an inequitable distribution of funds.

Legislation

Reforms in legislation are necessary to protect the rights of elderly citizens. These reforms include the proper administration of Title XX funds to insure the elderly a share of the pie, reform of certain Social Security provisions such as the limitations on income-earning for retired workers, protection of divorced wife's benefits if the divorce takes place before 20 years of marriage, protection of the disabled who must prove disability within 7 years of beneficiary death, adjust SSI benefits for homemakers caring for relatives such as a mother and sister.

In addition, while nursing homes find themselves the victim of cutbacks in Medicaid payments and therefore cannot deliver optimum services, unscrupulous operators have used such funds for personal gain. Therefore, better monitoring of Medicaid is necessary with a view toward increasing services where needed and weeding out the unscrupulous.

Retirement & Employment

After the age of 40, it becomes increasingly difficult to find employment. Retirement is mandatory in most jobs after 65 years of age, and many workers especially women, have no pension benefits.

Rural Concerns

140 rural counties in the nation do not have a physician and some communities still have limited auxiliary health services. For an older adult in rural America, most of the usual problems are compounded.

Transportation

The elderly often live in loneliness and physical isolation and have no access to public transportation. New transportation programs for the elderly are crucial especially in suburban and rural areas. It is also necessary for society to be aware of the special needs of the elderly and disabled in designing new transportation vehicles, i.e. lower steps on the buses.

Unmet Needs of The Elderly in Society

The needs of the older citizen, we have seen from this summary, vary from lack of adequate income to the very real need of continuing to remain an active member of society rather than feeling unwanted and useless. The United Church of Christ recognizes the need for pre-retirement counselling, adjustment and fruitful activities during retirement and also meeting the physical needs of the frail elderly.

III. RATIONALE

The time for action is now! Not a day passes when the media does not cover a story about elderly individuals whose very lives are threatened by crime, poor housing, nursing home scandals, poor health services and lack of sufficient food and inadequate income — to say nothing of loneliness and despair. The Gospel calls upon us to engage in a more direct effort to address these wrongs and, therefore, the church has a mandate to act!

The theological basis for ministry with the elderly is the same as that for all Christian ministry: as God loves us, so we are to love others—"As you do it for others, you do it for Me." Yet the special precariousness and vulnerability of the aging reminds us that they are especially prone to "hunger, thirst and nakedness"—and the special estrangement of the aging in our society reminds us that we are prone not to welcome them as strangers but to imprison them in their isolation.

Both prophet and apostle declare that the working of God's spirit in and among people should inspire the "young to see visions and the old to dream dreams" (Acts 2:17). The ministry of the church is to raise up men and women of all *ages* to live with the *vision* and hope of an unfolding future, which is beyond and worthier than the status quo. This ministry of the church includes all who are among the aging, to nourish *their* dreams and to help them translate *those* dreams into effective influence and action. In short, the church needs to encourage, inform, listen to, respond to, and support the aging as change agents in response to the continuing movement of God's spirit on behalf of peace, justice and respect for human dignity.

A full and faithful ministry of the church in respect to the aging needs to encompass their rights, roles, responsibilities, needs and contributions. We recognize, on the one hand, the extent of these elements which the aging have in common with all ages and, on the other hand, the particular aspects of each of these elements which call for special emphasis by the church because they are peculiar to or distinctive of the aging.

The church, by its very nature, locally and ecumenically, should be the advocate of the elderly. It can initiate legislation which will benefit the elderly; it can be an educational vehicle to raise the conscience of America to meet its responsibility to its elderly citizens.

IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DENOMINATION

Concern for the elderly is not to be a lofty position statement filed in the annals of General Synod, but must become a viable ministry at all levels of the church. The U.C.C. conferences, synods, associations, districts and

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local congregations are charged with the responsibility of demonstrating their concern for the older citizens of their communities. Too often, like not seeing the forest for the trees, we can emote and empathize over the issue of world hunger, but fail to see the malnourished widow living across the street from the local church.

This action report calls for an all-out and comprehensive effort on the part of the total U.C.C. church. Therefore, there are wide implications for all our structures. This plan calls for the establishment of working groups and task forces at every judicatory as well as the encouragement of those already in existence. The emphasis would be on working with the elderly themselves on all the problems which affect their lives.

Included in these concerns are the problems of emotional and spiritual need: loneliness, spiritual growth, preparation for death, separation from loved ones, fear, education and recreation, and the negative attitudes of the American public to the elderly. Emphasis would also be placed on a wide range of material needs: Insufficient income, housing, health care, nutrition, safety, transportation, employment and opportunities to be creative.

In order to be realistic about achieving such a goal, a program on aging concerns is needed in the denomination to coordinate and give impetus to such a comprehensive all-out effort. Such a program would have implications for local churches, associations and conferences, with national instrumentalities playing a supportive role.

Examples of national instrumentality involvement might include:

1. **Office of Communication** to be engaged in identifying and combating media stereotyping of the elderly. Development of educational and training material to assist in the process of change in systems which are detrimental to the image of our elderly population.
2. **Office for Church in Society** to give assistance in the monitoring and advocacy of legislative programs affecting the elderly such as Social Security, SSI, Title XX, national health care, HUD, etc.
3. **Office for Church Life and Leadership** to assist in setting up training programs for seminary students, laity and clergy relating to the elderly.
4. **Commission on Racial Justice** to address the needs of minority elderly in conjunction with other instrumentalities of the church.
5. **United Church Board for Homeland Ministries**
 - a. **Division of Education:** To develop curriculum and worship materials as well as examine the aspects of church life as regards the elderly population. Materials should emphasize that each conference and local church give special emphasis to this concern during the next biennium.
 - b. **Health & Welfare Division:** To work more actively with the agencies serving the elderly and their administrators. Continue to establish work with task forces in local churches and conferences concerned with the elderly, espe-

cially in such areas as innovative efforts in housing, senior centers, health programs, and geriatric day care programs as alternatives to institutionalization.

There are also external considerations and implications for the UCC church. All the national instrumentalities will have liaison with outside agencies and organizations involved in working together with and on behalf of the elderly. For instance, the Health & Welfare Division will be in touch with such advocacy organizations as the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging, The American Association of Homes for the Aging, The American Association of Retired Persons, The National Council on Aging, national Council of Senior Citizens and that well known advocacy group for senior citizens, the Grey Panthers.

Our ecumenical stance would put us in touch with other denominations concerned with establishing programs to minister with the elderly. Needless to say, a strong ecumenical, social and organizational base will enable the powerless to achieve a voice which is united and strong and which will hopefully impress our legislators on a local, state, and national scale.

Unfortunately, though our country is one of the richest in the world, it has not exhibited enough concern for the elderly citizens who contributed so much to its development. Therefore, the world community should see that America is aware and compassionate towards her elderly citizens. Our elderly citizens must themselves take the lead in working for their rightful recognition.

In addition, for the immediate future, the local churches can institute some thirty to forty programs of ministry to and with the elderly. Some of these programs cost nothing to institute other than volunteer help, while others cost both in terms of dollars and person power.

V. RESOURCES & RESPONSIBILITY

This denomination has had a long and effective ministry to the aged through its long-term care facilities, retirement homes, senior citizen centers, hospitals and neighborhood houses. We are richly endowed with the resources to make a significant contribution to an all-out effort to work with and for the elderly of this nation to the end and that deplorable conditions are corrected, human rights are met and Agism is erased from the American scene. U.C.C. local churches, colleges and seminaries are all resources which need to be used more fully in working with and for the elderly.

The aged are not without leadership and power. They have one of the most influential lobbies in Washington. (Witness its success in persuading the Senate to retain its Committee on the Aging.) They also maintain sophisticated lobbies in many state capitols and city halls. Aged people vote regularly, probably more so than does any group in the population. They have strong national organizations, Aged persons head important national bodies (AFL-CIO, the Supreme Court). They are active in local church leadership in all faiths and denominations.

VI. RESPONSIBILITY

The ultimate responsibility for implementing this pro-

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posal would rest with the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, which would be aided by an Advisory Committee composed of experts in the field of the Aged, representatives from key Conference Task Forces and selected staff from instrumentalities prepared to address the Aged issue. Staff work should be reported and reviewed by the Advisory Committee. Regular progress reports should be made to the Executive Council and the 12th General Synod.

VII. THE VOTE

We, as members of the United Church of Christ gathered at this General Synod, do hereby accept this study and declare ourselves committed to initiating and continuing a ministry *with* and *to* the elderly age 60 and over, on a national, Conference, Association and local church level.

Our investigation and study has convinced us that the UCC has the capacity to conduct the following ministries in relation to the aged, none of which will duplicate current programs of excellence that are being conducted by other organizations.

A. A continuing education program for U.C.C. minister/laity to help teach how to minister with and to the aged. It may be conducted by the Council for Health and Welfare Services, United Church of Christ agencies serving the aged through funded workshops and seminars. It may be conducted at or by a seminary working cooperatively with expertise from Council for Health and Welfare Services agencies serving the aged utilizing the resources of a graduate study institution that is qualified to teach the necessary theory and techniques and the agencies who are qualified to give practical impetus to the teaching.

B. Organization of an experimental ministry to the isolated elderly who live in urban centers and rural areas. Ministry will be an interdenominational effort and will involve consultation with the Council for Health and Welfare Services, other public and private agencies and United Church of Christ agencies serving the aged, church related visitation, counselling, recreation and monitoring of health and home care, and study of housing and transportation problems. Experimentation is contemplated in six geographical areas over a three year span.

C. A program to combat the negative images of the aged and discrimination against the aged in mass communication media. Coalitions will be organized throughout the USA to press for positive media service to the aged. They will be aided by advice and legal counsel from UCC field staff and the Council for Health and Welfare Services, United Church of Christ. A three-year effort is contemplated.

We recommend the responsibility for the foregoing projects and other programs to be developed with and for the aged be lodged in the UCBHM, with the understanding that the UCBHM will work cooperatively with the aid of the Council for Health and Welfare Services, United Church of Christ, other appropriate national instrumentalities and Conferences, Conference staffs, Associations and local churches.

"An interim in-progress report will be made to the 12th General Synod of the United Church of Christ and a

evaluative report will be made to the 13th General Synod with recommendation for continuance."

4. THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN RURAL AMERICA

Mr. Thomas noted the source of this resolution was A Proposed Pronouncement on "The Quality Of Life In Rural America," from the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference. He moved for adoption of the resolution in the Division B Report as a substitution for the original Pronouncement.

The motion was seconded, and Mr. Thomas explained the substitute as a clarification and condensation of the Kansas-Oklahoma pronouncement. Another difference was the assignment of primary oversight to the Office for Church in Society and the Board for Homeland Ministries.

Assistant Moderator Mistlin reiterated the process for deliberation of the proposal; attention would first be addressed to the "RESOLVED" clauses, then the "WHEREAS" clauses, and finally the main motion, adoption of the resolution as a whole.

Robert Alpers, Kansas-Oklahoma, moved that the amendment be changed by deletion of paragraphs 7 and 8 with a new wording. The motion was seconded, and Mr. Alpers offered his amendment as coming from the rural caucus, differing from the Division B Report only in being sharper about the work to be accomplished, and the responsibility for the pronouncement at the Twelfth General Synod.

Joyce Harmon, Chairperson, Office for Church in Society, supported the amendment. It made the mandate to that agency clearer; focused on the important issue of bridging the gap between rural and urban America by means of a dialogue; and identified public policy issues all governmental levels to which the church should pay special attention.

Davida Crabtree, Business Committee, asked for financial implications of the amendment. Mr. Alpers deferred to Garry Oniki, Executive Director, OCIS. He advised that the Kansas-Oklahoma people had been aware of the need for creation of a new task force to implement tasks stipulated in the amendment, and cited a cost of \$34,000.

William Yungolas, Iowa, reported three Division B votes against their proposal, as Iowa had wanted to make an exact change in it before its submission to the total Division. He supported the amendment as catching up the concerns of the Iowa people. Debate was closed, and it was

77-GS-22a VOTED: The Eleventh General Synod amends Division B Report, The "Quality of Life in Rural America," by deletion of paragraphs 7 and 8, beginning "RESOLVED" and "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED" and substitution of the following text:

"RESOLVED that the Eleventh General Synod requests that the Office for Church in Society plan and implement a process which will produce a Pronouncement for General Synod 12 on the "Quality of Life in Rural America,"

that the process include an Advisory Committee to be appointed by the Office for Church in Society and made up of Instrumentality, agency, Conference and local church people who share a concern for the life of rural Americans,

that it include a rural/urban dialogue which seeks to