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CONFERENCE ON

IMAGES OF OLD AGE IN THE AMERICAN MEDIA

sponsored by

The American Jewish Committee
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
United States Catholic Conference
Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University

under a grant from

The New York Times Company Foundation, Inc.

held at

Columbia University
December 8, 1977

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
165 East 56 Street, New York, N.Y. 10022

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INTRODUCTION

Persons over 65 made up about 12 percent of the nation in 1977; by 2030 they are expected to account for 17 percent. They are an important, though up to now largely neglected, segment of the consumer market, and are rapidly becoming a powerful political group in search of dignity and social justice. Their problems and the quality of their lives are becoming ever more urgent topics of discussion.

The status of old people in America depends to a crucial extent on how they are perceived by the nation as a whole. For this reason, it is vitally important how they are portrayed by the media and the advertising industry.

America's image of the aged has changed for the worse during recent decades. Half a century ago, the dignity of old age was still universally recognized. Though there was no Social Security, and age spelled poverty more often than it does today, "old folks" were seen as wise, strong, competent and blessed with humor. Grandmothers and grandfathers were active members of the family. Voluntary or mandatory retirement was rare; most people worked as long as they could.

Today, more often than not, America's old people are viewed as weak, depressed, querulous and forgetful--even as incapable or foolish. A poll conducted in 1975 by Louis Harris and Associates for the National Council on Aging found that Americans between 18 and 64 tended to perceive the aged as ineffectual, sedentary people whiling away their days in isolation.

Historians have yet to analyze how and why we lost our positive view of old age. But whatever the historical reasons, it is clear that the media today help reinforce and perpetuate myths and stereotypes about aging and the aged.

Beth B. Hess, Associate Professor of Social Science at Rutgers University, has noted that the media "operate in a society in which youthfulness is the valued state of being, in which wrinkles, grey hair, lack of zap and irregularity must be eradicated." We do not even accept middle age gracefully, Hess points out, let alone the onset of old age; and there are as yet few role models or accepted norms for today's generation of elders.

* * *

The Conference on Images of Old Age in the American Media was convened to explore how the media could portray the aged, their problems and potentialities, as they really are, thereby deepening public understanding and respect. The prime mover of the undertaking was the American Jewish Committee, which has long been concerned with the ways in which our knowledge about particular population groups and our attitudes toward them are shaped by the editorial and advertising content of the press, radio and television.

Back in 1967, the American Jewish Committee, as an agency deeply engaged in civil rights issues, was asked by the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice to conduct a pioneering conference on "The Media and Race Relations," which was subsequently credited with a number of important changes in journalistic

practice. AJC found ready partners for this enterprise in Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism and the American Civil Liberties Union.

By 1977, older Americans were in turn bidding for dignity and equality. Again, the American Jewish Committee was heavily involved, through a number of activities under the leadership of Samuel Sadin, Vice President of AJC's New York Chapter. Morton Yarmon, AJC's Director of Public Relations, who had played a central role in the 1967 race conference, proposed a similar consultation on the media and the aged. Ann G. Wolfe, AJC's Social Welfare Consultant, and Sonya F. Kaufer, AJC's Director of Publications, took over important aspects of the conference planning.

With its record in combatting stereotypes that hinder the solution of social problems, the Columbia School of Journalism was again a natural co-sponsor. To broaden the base further, two additional organizations, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and the United States Catholic Conference, were invited to co-sponsor the meeting. Dr. William F. Fore undertook responsibility for NCCC, Robert B. Beusse and the Reverend Thurston Davis for USCC. The Columbia School of Journalism was represented by Dean Elie Abel and Assistant Dean Christopher G. Trump, who eventually served as hosts for the conference.

The funds needed to conduct the conference and disseminate its results were provided through a grant from the New York Times Company Foundation. The conference sponsors are deeply grateful to the Foundation and to its President, Fred M. Hechinger, for this act of generosity, which turned a promising idea into a productive reality.

On December 8, 1977, representatives of the older community spent a day conferring in nine workshop groups with media and advertising people, candidly analyzing present shortcomings and seeking new insights and strategies that would be of immediate practical use. Well over 100 persons participated. Their deliberations were supplemented by presentations on "Stereotypes and News Practices: Uses and Misuses of Both," by W. Phillips Davison, Professor of Journalism and Sociology, Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University, and on "The Media and the Social Security System," by Nelson H. Cruikshank, Chairman of the Federal Council on Aging and Counselor on Aging to the President. Mr. Yarmon was overall chairman of the conference, and Ms. Wolfe and Dr. Fore chaired plenary sessions.

Vital contributions were made by the nine moderators of the discussion workshops: Father Davis, Dr. Fore, Mr. Sadin, Lillian Margolin, Betty Yarmon, and four AJC staff members--Mrs. Kaufer, Natalie Flatow, Harry Fleischman and Rabbi A. James Rudin. AJC's Rose Feitelson and Frances P. Rosenberg gave valuable assistance, as did Leah Fink and Leonore Kellerman.

The discussions were recorded by Paul Salisbury of the New York University Medical Center and Chris Bowman, Steve Gunn, Victoria Irwin, Miles M. Merwin, Jeffrey Scheuer, Barbara Shulgasser and Stephen White, all students at the Columbia School of Journalism. George Salomon, Senior Editor of Publications at AJC, supervised their note-taking and wrote the present report.

It is hoped that this record will inspire similar conferences in other parts of the country, and will continue to spark insights and ideas. The sponsors stand ready to provide informal consultation, both to organizations of the aged and to representatives of the media, so as to help broaden communications between the two groups and improve the public's perceptions of older Americans.

WORKSHOP AND PLENARY DISCUSSIONS

The discussions of the nine workshop groups into which the conference was divided are reported below under topical headings. Additional points discussed in the closing plenary are also included.

I. TODAY'S IMAGES

GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF MEDIA PERFORMANCE

Television and other media were sweepingly criticized in most or all of the workshop groups. A television representative who declared, "I don't see what is wrong with the TV image of old age," found little or no agreement. One group took issue with the findings of a Harris survey indicating that many or most of the aged were satisfied with their portrayal on the radio and TV, claiming that the views and data presented at the conference showed otherwise.

Various workshop groups, some of them unanimous, decried the treatment of the old in the media as inadequate, unfair or distorted. In one group, a complaint was heard that age was represented by extreme types, to the exclusion of average people: either by the poor or by celebrities like Lillian Carter. Elsewhere, a media representative noted that newspapers sometimes went out of their way to accentuate the negative, as in the coverage of nursing home abuses.

In one workshop, women representatives of the aged asserted that men dominated the media and discussions of media concerns, including the present conference: "If you look at this program today, you will notice no woman is speaking."

From the other side, at least two media people contended that a case could be made for any minority being misrepresented or slighted on the screen. A broadcasting representative said TV writers had begun to realize that they must treat the aged more positively, but that they were not yet getting enough guidance to do it well. Another similarly acknowledged a lag between what the media learn and what they do. At least one group unanimously agreed that all media--especially documentaries and TV drama--had shown increased sensitivity to images and concerns of the aged in the past three years or so.

CURRENT STEREOTYPES

Much criticism was addressed to particular negative stereotypes. In the aggregate, these were thought not only to impair the dignity of the old, but also to deprive the young of a model for aging.

The old, it was said, were represented as stubborn and opinionated, confused and forgetful, unproductive and aimless, out of touch with current issues and resistant to change, sexless and reduced in intelligence. There weren't any sensible, strong, virile old people in TV commercials, someone asserted; in advertising, it

was charged, "everyone thinks people are senile after age 50." And, said one participant, there are probably additional stereotypes, which we do not recognize as such because they agree with our own preconceptions.

Particularly resented was what was considered an excessive emphasis on physical and mental illness among the old. In several workshops, participants criticized the media's preoccupation with nursing homes, stressing that only about 5 percent of people over 65 were institutionalized, while some 85 percent considered themselves in good health.

What was perceived as an obsession with the aged as poor was repeatedly noted. In news reporting, "fixed income" had become almost synonymous with "old age," one woman from the broadcasting industry asserted. This image was thought to possess a degree of validity, in that aged people themselves were believed to consider money a problem more often than health. At the same time, the suggestion that the old were "draining the Social Security system" was vigorously rejected by a representative of the aged, who pointed out that many handicapped or otherwise disadvantaged persons under 65 were Social Security beneficiaries.

GRANDPA AND GRANDMA AS VICTIMS

Studies by the Gray Panthers were cited, showing that television constantly depicted old people as victims; as a rule they appeared only briefly and had to have their problems solved by younger persons. This image of powerlessness and dependency was thought to be the most damaging of all by at least one workshop group, where the moderator drew attention to the all-pervasive assumption that the aged had to have things done for them by others (witness designations like "Department for the Aging"). However, a media representative in this workshop countered that the perception of the aged as powerless had once been correct and perhaps still was.

The perceived imputation of passivity and listlessness to the aged, their alleged lack of motivation and desire, was critically noted in several workshops. "I am an older person, and I have no fewer desires today than I had many years ago," one woman said. "To sell products, older people are presented as sexless, over the hill," observed another, "and older people see and believe this myth too." However, a newsman cautioned that it would be equally a myth to depict the old as "eighty-year-old bundles of fun."

LOVE AND SEX

Most of the workshops discussed at least briefly how the media represent love and sex among the old. In one group, a participant questioned whether the problem did not lie in the real hindrances to old-age sex rather than in its portrayal; but by and large, imagery was considered a crucial factor. A participant from the academic world said: "We need dirty old men and dirty old women to balance out the stereotypes," and a spokesperson for the aged said women often lacked sex in old age because men did not regard them as attractive.

The performance of the media in this field received mixed reviews. In two groups it was judged particularly bad; in at least two others, it was found serious and sympathetic, especially on the part of newspapers. In one workshop, several people thought soap operas should show more old people having affairs and leading a

generally full life, but media representatives appeared leery of presenting what they feared might be unrealistic situations. One group asked the media to recognize more fully that the predominance of women in the over-65 age group makes old-age love and sex primarily a women's problem; another thought the media should stress that older women can be sexually interesting to older men--as well as interested in younger men.

One older man argued that the media reflected a "double standard": Young people today, he said, readily condone living together without marriage, but not in the case of older people. However, a media man thought the media had fallen somewhat behind current attitudes. On college campuses, he said, "the general feeling about love or sex bears no resemblance to 10 years ago, yet the media are just catching up to that."

WHAT'S FUNNY?

Humor at the expense of the aged evoked a number of complaints. Thus, in one workshop, representatives of the aged and the media agreed that treating old-age love and sex as funny caused old people to be embarrassed about showing each other affection. Elsewhere, too, there were objections to the use of old-age sex for an easy laugh on TV. One older person thought this sort of humor might represent a way of dealing with the touchy subject of sex between one's parents.

A media man worried about the future of humor under what he considered the growing censorship exercised by population groups. He pointed out that, with more groups (blacks, Catholics, Jews and so on) becoming taboo as objects of fun, the rest, including the aged, become more vulnerable. But it was quickly agreed that creativity need not be stifled--that, for example, blacks or old people could still figure in humorous situations, as long as the humor did not stereotypically fasten on their blackness or age. Similarly, an old person in another group said: "When you laugh with us and not at us, we will laugh too."

THE INVISIBLE OLD

A complaint heard in many workshops was that old people were underrepresented in the media, or completely absent from them except for dotards. A spokeswoman for the aged argued that people over 65 were virtually "nonpersons"; though they made up 11 percent of the nation, she said, they appeared in only 3 percent of TV programs. Media people agreed with her that "in family shows, the family stops at 50." In another workshop, a media man acknowledged, and most of the group agreed, that "until recently, [the media] have largely overlooked the problems of the elderly."

One woman complained that the media treated old people like freaks, and someone else said they sometimes missed good stories about them--such as a "rock and roll" wheelchair jamboree held in 1976 in nursing homes throughout the country, for the benefit of the Heart Fund.

To strictures like these, a media representative replied that the media were not unaware of the problem. Thanks to demographic change there now was "less 18 and more 49," he said; media people were being educated to report on the old as on any other groups.

A NEGLECTED MARKET

Virtually all workshops complained of disregard for older people as consumers and investors. In at least one workshop, the sparse representation of the advertising industry at the conference was commented on. In another the mere presence of an ad agency representative was thought significant.

Advertising, it was claimed, tried only to sell to the young. "Agencies target for people half my age," said one of the older participants. "ABC beats people over the head about the youth of their audience--despite the fact that a lot of older people watch ABC too."

Discussants were puzzled why advertising seemed virtually to ignore millions of older people while reaching out to children. It was felt that the media thought the old did not have the kind of money to spend that would justify advertising and programming addressed to them. In this connection, a media spokesman recalled that bank advertising used to ignore the aged until direct deposit of Social Security checks was allowed--whereupon a sudden flurry of ads begged for their business.

In actual fact, people over 55 spend a lot, several participants pointed out. Some cited supporting data from the American Association of Retired Persons. Many of the aged today have the staples and can afford the frills, it was asserted; they not only are heavy users of products like indigestion aids, denture cream, yogurt and instant coffee, but also buy new automobiles, mopeds and household appliances, and have expensive tastes in liquor. They travel and buy condominiums. With their free time and disposable income, it was stressed, they are good prospects for sales.

An ad man in one workshop said that the advertising industry was now focusing on the more affluent among old people, but was still making a mistake in neglecting the less well-off. But in another group, a government aide took the opposite tack. It was just as well, she said, that the aged market was no bigger than it was, because the commercial ambience created exploitation.

THE MONOLITHIC IMAGE

Lumping old people together indiscriminately or portraying them as a unitary, monolithic interest group was criticized by some participants as a form of stereotyping. It was argued that the aged were a heterogeneous group and that being old did not necessarily bring people together. For example, it was said, rich and poor old people do not mix; their economic interests cut across the age categories. Someone noted that old people also are viewed differently in different ethnic groups.

A newsman countered that, if anything, the media were guilty of not putting the aged into a sufficiently visible category, in that news concerning the aged was as a rule subsumed under substantive headings such as "nursing homes" or "Social Security". More explicit categorizing might actually focus more attention on the aged than they now get, he suggested.

A media representative contended that the aged actually fell into three different classifications, all of which the media wanted to reach: the frail and passive, the creative and self-generating, and the sociable and peer-oriented.

THE WORDS WE USE

Terms used in referring to the aged were considered important; a majority of the workshop groups discussed the subject. Euphemisms like "golden age" and "sunset years" were found distasteful by a number of participants, and expressions like "sweet old lady" or "blue-haired old ladies" were likened by one participant to the condescending stereotypes formerly applied to other minorities.

Media people asked if "senior citizen" and "older people" were acceptable. One older man said he objected to the former despite its usage by the National Council of Senior Citizens; someone else regretted that "senior citizen" and "elderly" had been used in the opening speeches of the conference. In at least one workshop, "senior citizen" was disliked unanimously, or nearly so. A media person thought that "senior citizen" would soon fall by the wayside, and that "sunset years" and "golden age" had already started to do so.

No one term for the aged was completely agreed on, but in at least three workshops "old" or "older" appeared to be favored. "Over 60" was dismissed because it implied a sharp dividing line between young and old.

One media representative pointed out that terms were not necessarily good or bad in themselves: "We no longer use the term 'Negro,' but there is nothing wrong with it--it just has negative connotations." Another media person asserted that the question of vocabulary was overemphasized and that what was said about people mattered more than in what words it was said; but this view was shared by few if any other participants.

II. FORMATS AND TOPICS

DIFFERENT MEDIA COMPARED

Two workshops thought the press treated old age better than TV, with less stereotyping. A media man suggested a reason: Television is dominated by entertainment, the press by information. Newsday, the Long Island daily, was singled out for praise. ✓

In one workshop, the newspapers published weekly and given away free in many neighborhoods were mentioned as a potentially or actually valuable medium for material about or for the aged. These papers were thought to be widely read, possibly more than dailies. —

TV ENTERTAINMENT

The Carol Burnett show was singled out by at least two workshop groups as derogatory--in one case by a TV spokesman, who characterized it as a product of lazy writing. The Johnny Carson show was similarly criticized in at least two workshops, particularly for what was considered its exploitation of love and sex among the aged: "Johnny Carson drives us up the wall." ✓

With a few exceptions, soap operas were thought less offensive than other TV formats. A participant from a university said they were the only place where old people were decently portrayed, and a media spokesperson contended that they

often dealt with problems, including those of the aged, long before prime-time television did.

The treatment of the aged in "The Waltons" received a positive rating in at least three groups--in one case by the TV spokesman who had criticized the Carol Burnett show. The negative public reaction to the putting-down of age in "Logan's Run," a recent CBS science fiction series, was considered a sign of a healthy shift in attitudes.

A workshop discussing the "Mary Hartman" show could not agree on the character of the "Fernwood Flasher," an aged exhibitionist. Some participants found him derogatory to old age; other disagreed, because it seemed to them to be implied that his foible antedated his later years.

TV COMMERCIALS

Television advertising was criticized not only for neglecting the aged as an audience, but also for not featuring them often enough in messages addressed to general audiences, and especially for portraying them in disrespectful ways.

All or nearly all the workshops felt that, of all communication formats, TV commercials were most derogatory to old age--though in one group a newsman argued that some commercials insult everyone, not just the old. Advertising in general was accused of ridiculing the aged with unfunny things like deafness. A survey was cited showing that from 28 to 38 percent of old people think advertising portrays them as ridiculous, childish or decrepit.

In one workshop, however, some recent change was noted, and in at least three, a current Dannon Yogurt commercial was commended because it featured a 102-year-old man in what was thought a good-natured way. An advertising woman reported that the Dannon commercial, the first to show old people in a happy situation, had been a success.

NEWS COVERAGE

In each workshop, someone considered news coverage of the aged and their concerns --in the press, on the radio or on TV--less accurate, thorough, comprehensive or balanced than it might be. This was a surprising state of affairs, someone commented, considering the attention the media had lately given to problems of death and dying. However, in at least one workshop it was unanimously felt that coverage, especially in the press, had improved during the last three years or so--a change credited by one participant to the Gray Panthers.

A number of participants said the news concentrated too much on celebrities and unusual persons among the old, often in what someone called a "gee-whizz" manner: "When you get a story on Golda Meir or Winston Churchill, it always stresses their age." But a press reporter asserted that it was in the nature of newspapers to be concerned with "extraordinary people doing ordinary things" or vice versa, and another media man said older people were often prominently featured in the news without reference to their age where it was not relevant--as in the case of "the hero of the Watergate hearings" (presumably Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski).

One big-city newspaperman reported that his paper had not felt pressure for more or better coverage of the aged; another newsman said such coverage, though quite

comprehensive in the largest cities, was poor in nine-tenths of the country. A media representative from Israel thought TV handling of matters concerning the aged was good in the U.S.--but only for insomniacs, because most of the relevant programs were relegated to night hours.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

A mass media representative stated that public service programming for older people had been tried in a number of instances, mostly at the local level, but had not been handled very well. In another workshop, public-service announcements were criticized for being long on consciousness raising and short on specifics. Those which describe specific services or events could be useful, it was suggested --provided the services were really available to the audience reached.

The "Get Off Your Rocker" campaign was liked by two people and disliked by two others. It suggested that old people sat around idle by choice, the latter said, and it played down their special needs.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND MEDIA CONCERNING THE AGED

WNBC-TV in New York currently offers "Prime of Your Life," a Sunday public affairs program for and about the aged, a representative of the station noted. She added that the station had been criticized for giving too much air time to old people's concerns. NBC was spending a lot of money on Sunday programming for the aged, it was stated elsewhere, but could not hope to make much with it because of the relatively small audience (currently about 150,000).

In one workshop, an older participant criticized "Prime of Your Life" (as well as "Easy Over," another program about the aged) for lacking variety in guests, reporters and subjects. The question was also raised whether such special programs tended to aggravate the "pigeonholing" of the old, or to isolate old and young from each other. Some participants felt that the special problems of the aged justified programs addressed to them; others vigorously took issue with the idea of a "Sunday morning ghetto hour." Meanwhile, at least one workshop group hailed "Prime of Your Life" as a sign of progress precisely because many of the subjects it deals with (such as health, nutrition, exercise, money matters) are of interest to other people besides the old.

A newspaper addressed to old people, entitled Senior Summary, is published on the Upper East Side of Manhattan by the New York Junior League as a public service, it was reported. Copies are mailed free and given away at the organization's office.

SPECIFIC SHORTCOMINGS IN COVERAGE

One subject area thought to be getting insufficient attention in current reporting was health and the delivery of health care. However, in one workshop, media people suggested that coverage of this topic was becoming more thorough.

Other subjects which some participants felt were being slighted in news reporting included home care for the aged as an alternative to institutionalization, and the financial problems of old age. Safety and its lack were also a matter in need of more coverage, it was suggested in one workshop. But in two other groups,

participants maintained that crimes against aged people were getting too much attention. One person asserted that there were fewer such crimes in New York than the news stories suggested, and that the reports were creating additional problems for social service agencies.

EXPLAINING SOCIAL SECURITY AND OTHER GOVERNMENT BENEFITS

In half or more of the workshops, it was asserted that the media--especially the press and radio--were not doing a good enough job informing readers about Social Security, Medicare or other government benefits available to the aged, or that they were doing so in forbiddingly technical language. They were charged with not doing their homework in these highly complex areas, relying on handouts or dispensing vague generalizations.

A participant from the academic world noted that the funding of Social Security and the limitations under which it operates were not being properly explained. A union official charged that the media had failed to draw attention to the regressive character of the U.S. Social Security system compared with, for example, that of Sweden. Conflict between the generations about the rising cost of Social Security was noted as an increasingly acute topic, which, it was suggested, the media would not find easy to handle.

In one workshop group, media people themselves criticized scare articles about Social Security--for example, reports that the system was going broke. Contradictions were also noted: Some time ago, it was said, the line had been that people were not getting back what they had paid in; now it was that people were getting too much. On the other hand, at least one workshop group approved the Chicago Daily News series "Social Security: The Fraud in Your Future," which Mr. Cruikshank had scored as misleading in his address [see page 28]. The series was thought to have been useful in opening up previously unmentioned aspects of Social Security and forcing the Government to respond.

A government aide urged that Social Security stories be checked with more than routine care, because even a 10-cent error could affect a lot of people. She told of an instance where an inaccurate story sent flocks of panicky constituents to a Congressman's office. A subsequent rebuttal was buried in the news, she added.

Complaints about superficial press coverage of government benefits were disputed by one media person. It was also noted that the Columbia School of Journalism was currently working on ways to improve reporting in this field.

REPORTING THE RETIREMENT ISSUE

In connection with pending legislation to ban mandatory retirement at age 65, one participant claimed young people were being propagandized to think that the old deprived them of jobs by staying in the labor market. Someone else in the same workshop rejoined that many people did not want to work after 65.

The media were charged with having treated the issue stereotypically and superficially when it was new, and with continuing to soft-pedal it. A media man alleged that newspapers were as interested as anyone else in getting rid of older people; that, he said, was why they often played down stories about mandatory retirement, or glossed over the fact that it offers employers an easy way to cut payrolls.

In two instances, the retirement practices of the media themselves were scored. Their rule of retirement at 65 was not only discriminatory, it was charged in one group; it also frequently cut off staff members in the prime of their creativity, as in the case of Eric Sevareid of CBS. In another workshop, CBS was criticized for following what was considered a selective policy: While Mr. Sevareid had to retire, William Paley, who is much older, remains chairman.

III. WHY THE MEDIA ARE THAT WAY

REASONS FOR MEDIA SHORTCOMINGS

Various speculative reasons were offered why advertising and the media deal with the aged as they do--among them lack of awareness; the absence of older advertising copywriters; scarcity of funds for public information campaigns; the medical profession, which was said to look upon the aged as intractable hypochondriacs; the Social Security system, which allegedly stigmatizes those past 65 as "over the hill."

No one appeared to think that the media purposely gave a negative view of old age. A broadcasting executive engaged in programming for the aged pointed out that there is no such thing as a mirror image of the truth--that the media, by their nature, have to be selective and thus cannot help shaping the image in some degrees.

In several workshops, unsound images and attitudes concerning the aged were attributed to conditions in the society at large rather than to the media. It was emphasized that retirement at a relatively early age was reducing contact between old and young on the job, at a time when mobility and the passing of the traditional extended family had already much reduced it at home, and that the gap was bound to widen further as the family continued to break up.

One workshop group held the media indirectly responsible for the way the old are viewed today. Television had largely determined the massive social changes of the past 20 years, this group thought, turning America into a sectionalized society where each section is recognized only according to its purchasing power and receptiveness to advertising, and where the old are neglected because they are thought to be poor consumers.

THE MEDIA--LEADERS OR FOLLOWERS?

Whether the media create or merely reflect public attitudes was debated, somewhat inconclusively, in several workshops. A media representative declared, "We don't lead--we react to movements;" a spokesperson from the academic world said people had an exaggerated notion of media influence. But in at least one workshop this position was branded a cop-out. The media, it was thought here, actually were both leaders and followers: They reflected attitudes in the society (not always accurately), but they also had the power to mold them. In another workshop, someone said: "The media are opinion-makers; they have the responsibility to reveal and remove stereotypic reflections;" and in a third, it was asserted that the media "could do anything"--witness their success in abruptly reversing Americans' attitudes toward the Soviet Union during the Second World War.

In one group, the presumed power of the media to form opinions evoked some contradictory views. A spokesman for the aged thought changing public attitudes was a proper job for the media, and could be done only by them. A labor representative urged the media to abandon their present "passivity" to become advocates for the aged. But others protested that deliberate efforts to change attitudes were not a proper function of the media and warned of a dangerous precedent for thought control.

THE YOUTH-ORIENTED AMERICAN CULTURE

The preoccupation of the media with youth was frequently commented on. A writer reported that he had had trouble selling a novel about older people, with publishers saying no one was interested in them.

Radio and television were charged with suggesting that only the young and beautiful matter. WOR Radio in New York was cited as having hired a 31-year-old manager to appeal to a younger audience. TV people, especially those who appear on the air, are mostly young, it was claimed; as they grow older, they are discriminated against. An older participant said an "incredible" number of media men were undergoing cosmetic surgery to remain employable and stay in line for promotions.

Practices and emphases like these were thought to stem directly from the American culture's obsession with youth. The national concern with sports puts a premium on youth and physical beauty, it was pointed out. Commercial interests remained preoccupied with the 18-to-49 market, someone said, asserting that, for example, few items in the "Living" section of The New York Times related to the aged.

In one workshop, the use of young, beautiful models to help sell cars was discussed. One young TV producer said she found this practice insulting to the young as well as the old: "I'm not surrounded by young, beautiful people all the time either."

A young participant said the prevailing youth cult caused young people to be afraid of aging. In an exchange in another workshop, one woman acknowledged her own fear of growing old; an older woman quipped in response that the only alternative was to die young. Several others agreed that they wanted to live until they tired of living.

Idolizing of youth and disregard for old age were thought in several workshop groups to be a recent development, possibly a product of the Kennedy years. A number of people recalled that the aged had not always been outsiders but used to enjoy respect as members of the family and sources of wisdom; hence the young in those days had accepted the prospect of aging more readily. "I wanted to grow old, but I didn't think I was going to be so lucky," one woman said. In another workshop, two media people agreed: "Once, on TV or anywhere, the older person was the sign of wisdom; now it just doesn't seem important what happened in 1890." In one group, mandatory retirement was considered an example of the prevailing bias in favor of the qualities of youth and against those of old age.

BEYOND THE YOUTH CULT

Repeatedly, it was suggested that America's infatuation with youth could or should be overcome. One older man contended, and others agreed, that the present

(high valuation of youth stemmed from war conditions, and that, with circumstances and demographic factors changing, old people would again be revered five years hence.

Elsewhere it was suggested that schools take notice of the subject of aging, because young people would not be turned off or frightened by the problems of old age if they were better informed. "The aged aren't like any other minority," a young media person said. "Eventually, we'll all be members of it. That's why it is so important to get the ball rolling." One of the older people in the group agreed, saying, "We have to educate both the young and the old." In another group it was argued that old people should worry less about what others think of them and should try to communicate with the young--even though the young might at first be unresponsive.

Some believed a countertrend had already begun. In at least two workshops, it was suggested that young people today were less self-centered and now-oriented than in the 1960s, and more interested in the full range of life, including older people's experiences. Various current community programs were thought to indicate that the young wanted to know about the old and to serve them. It was argued that with better nutrition and new drugs lengthening life spans, people were having more contact with aged individuals, realizing more vividly that old age affects everyone, and learning that you don't have to be old to sympathize with the old.

A woman connected with radio reported that she was already following these trends by keeping her show intergenerational, and a representative of the aged discerned some multigenerational situations in current advertising. In the future, it was suggested, the media might help launch a movement to sensitize children to the dignity of old age. Also, advertisers might indirectly appeal to young adults through their elders, as they now do through their children ("Don't buy a car until you consult with your grandmother"), and in doing so would come to grips with the realities about old people.

Revision of prevailing beauty ideals was named in one workshop as another possible dimension. The moderator, a fashion expert, noted that at present clothes designed for all ages and sizes were modeled by 22-year-olds. A TV spokesman commented that advertising responds to people's dreams--hence "mutton dressed up as lamb." But others replied that each age bracket had its characteristic beauty and that ideas of what is attractive could well be modified, so that ads need not rely so single-mindedly on young models. In another workshop, someone noted that Vogue Pattern Book, which has a large market among older people, had featured a frankly old but beautiful woman as a model.

IV. CHANGE IN THE AIR

WHAT IS WANTED FROM THE MEDIA

Alongside criticism of present media offerings, a good many suggestions were presented for possible formats, approaches and topics through which the concerns of the aged could be covered in greater depth and with better balance.

(With respect to formats, participants urged the print media to run interpretative articles of some length rather than just short items, and to feature specialized

The 'doddering old fools' fight back

By JUDSON HAND

OLD-AGE HOMES that are notoriously squalid and overpriced. A Social Security system with a financial base that seems shakier every year. Forced retirements at 65.

You would think that, with horrendous problems like these, the nation's increasingly militant old people would not need to embark on a new crusade. But they have begun a new crusade with a vengeance: a campaign to improve their image as "sick, disabled, forgetful" or just plain ridiculous, which, they claim, is all too dominant on radio, TV and in print.

"Images of Old Age in the American Media" was, in fact, the sole topic of an all-day conference at Columbia's School of Journalism on Thursday.

The more than 100 participants represented Catholic, Jewish and Protestant groups and other organizations, including the Panthers. The tone of the conference was militant.

Are the old people reacting to the way they are portrayed in the way they have come up with some projects to prove otherwise.

For example, the publication ran a survey of its readers to find out what three words best describe people over 60 are generally depicted. The leading words were ridiculous, decrepit and senile. Only 9% of those surveyed thought they were usually depicted as "with-it." In all, 70% went to negative attributes.

In the same survey, incidental

and "The Johnny Carson Show." Not surprisingly "The Waltons," "Lawrence Welk" and "Marcus Welby, M.D." were chosen as projecting the best images of old people.

Old people, of course, are not taking their negative images sitting down in easy chairs. The National Gray Panthers, in fact, have instituted a media-watch to monitor their image on TV.

When the Panther group sees an episode in which old people are depicted in ridiculous stereotypes, they protest loudly to the media. These protests have, in specific cases, produced "good results," says Lydia Bragger, coordinator of the media-watch.

However, she adds that old people still are not realistically depicted in terms of their diversity, "good, bad or indifferent," in the media at large.

In some ways, old people face the same kind of image problems that were faced and at least partially

THE BOSTON HERALD AMERICAN

The system isn't perfect and neither is the press

By WENDELL COLTIN

Much of the criticism of Social Security has been that if the program didn't exist, there would be no problem, Nelson Cruikshank said at the recent Columbia University conference on "Images of Old Age in the

Your questions are welcome. Address Medicare Mailbox, Boston Herald American, 300 Harrison Ave., Boston, Mass. 02106.

American Jewish Committee, National Council of the Churches of Christ, the United States Catholic Conference, and the Columbia Uni-

THE TABLET (BROOKLYN, N.Y.)

Can America Be Told Old Is Beautiful?

BY TRACY EARLY

Can American Society be taught that old is beautiful? Some 100 representatives of the media and organizations concerned with problems of the elderly explored this question at a day-long conference at Columbia University.

The conference was initiated by the American Jewish Committee, which brought in as joint sponsors the U.S. Conference (USCC), the National Council of the Churches of Christ (NCCC) and the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism.

Including session reporting on small group advertising agencies that identify youth with other desirable traits were cited as the major negative stereotypes about the elderly.

Dr. William Fore, head of the NCC commission, participants in the conference representatives of the elderly should meet with agency representatives for a discussion of among those grievances is the common expression through ads that any sign of aging is destructive of all other happiness.

WOMEN'S WEAR DAILY (NEW YORK)

Stereotyped image of over-65s in America

by Samuel Feinberg

They're 24 million strong, 3 million more than seven years ago, about 11 percent of the U.S. population. By the end of this century, the group may account for nearly 32 million, 13 percent of the total and, by 2030, for about 52 million, 17 percent of the population. They are men and women — always more of the latter — 65 years of age or older. The phenomenon has been called "the graying of America."

Several months ago, a conference, entitled "Images of Old Age in the American Media," was held at Columbia University. The 120 participants represented a wide range of social, religious and educational organizations and media and included retirees. Stress was placed on the shortsightedness, even cruelty, of viewing older people as almost uniformly weak, dependent, querulous and unattractive.

ntly protested to Nor- vision producer, an epi- e Family" that depicted n getting married in a e protest alleged that insentively handled — i. Berger said—by mak- look ridiculous by de- hite bridal gown, wear- y and nodding off to ted near her wedding

id spokesman for Mrs o rebroadcast the epi- first broadcast on Oct. 2 monitoring group to person to review future 's California production

der conference partici- programs sponsored by tion for Services to the 1 1199 of the National and Health Care Em-

d by Laura Lawrence, sion news operations at they thought of a her station received "ll" regarding crimes office that they had en-

muggings, rapes and in the conference said and felt that much of rly explicit, tending to

ors of the conference n Jewish Committee, Catholic Conference, ouncil of the Churches

what's our false lunch?

en so effective that recently ns active in the media com- plem. The conference spon- an Jewish Committee, the the Churches of Christ in ted States Catholic Confer- hool of Journalism under a

RETIREMENT LIVING IRL Poll Cited to Back Up Charges That TV Slight Older People

Carr warns against media distortions

NEW YORK, NY—The "Images of Old Age in the American Media" are far from accurate or positive and it's time for America to fight back.

columns and reporting. It was thought that this could be done without losing sight of those interests which the old share with the young.

TV and radio were asked to make more of their potential for conveying information in easily understood form--among others, to illiterates, who reportedly constitute between 5 and 8 percent of the aged. However, it was recognized that certain highly technical topics such as the effects of ERISA--the 1974 Employment Retirement Income Security Act, which put the operation of private pension funds under Federal supervision--do not lend themselves to TV presentation.

With respect to attitudes and imagery, it was stressed that the aged wanted the media to treat them with dignity, portray them truthfully as people with productivity, integrity and human desires, and recognize their political clout. The same was said to apply to as yet unexamined information media, such as textbooks. Media and advertising were called upon to foster understanding and respect for the aged, for example, through programs about old age addressed to younger people. With good sense and good taste and no cheap shots, it was said, the media could lead the way in eliminating stereotypes, and thereby break what the moderator of one group described as the vicious circle of discrimination, frustration, lethargy and more discrimination bedeviling old people.

SOME SUGGESTED TOPICS

Housing problems--particularly the harassment of older tenants on fixed incomes by landlords--are one area where the media could do a great deal to help old people get their rights, a spokeswoman for the aged suggested. Aged tenants often do not know, she said, what they are entitled to from their landlords, or what aids and benefits--for example, exemptions from certain rent increases--are available to them. (One reason such information had been so scarce up to now, she speculated, might be that the agencies concerned are underfunded and have no interest in encouraging every eligible person to apply.)

Another suggested area where the media could serve the aged was money-saving opportunities, which, someone contended, could be multiplied through publicity. The "senior citizens' discounts" offered by the Korvette department stores in New York were mentioned in this context. It was noted that many papers had carried a story on a real estate tax advantage available to the aged in California.

Elsewhere, it was thought that the media might devote major attention to retirement activities, because "many people don't know how to retire." (However, it was pointed out that some documentaries and "All in the Family" had dealt with this issue.) In one workshop, a quiz program on myths and facts about aging, along the lines of CBS's successful "Drivers Test" program, was proposed; in another, attention was drawn to a forthcoming WNET documentary on aging.

"A PART OF SOCIETY"

While the aged in the U.S. are beginning to be seen, and to see themselves, as a distinct interest group, the discussions clearly showed that they also want to be an integral part of the nation--"a part of, not apart from, society," as one discussant put it.

In various ways, members of several workshops endorsed integration or identification with the larger society. A media representative rejected the "myth" that

the old are purely peer-oriented, and deplored their segregation in separate housing projects, where they lose their influence on younger people. One of the older people concurred: "I like to see children, see life where I live. The old learn from the young and vice versa." One workshop emphasized that the society should support action in concert with, not simply on behalf of, the aged. One older man said the media were wrong in setting old people apart by representing age as their main cause of unhappiness; actually, he stated, their chief trouble was lack of money--the same problem as everyone else's.

Segregation of the aged was thought by some to be a peculiarly American problem. An older woman who had traveled in Europe as a free-lance writer noted that in Sweden communities for the aged were integrated with the rest of society. Another participant added that Sweden had a system of gradual retirement. A media representative from Israel stated that in her country people as old as 80 were considered useful members of the community and that, presumably for this reason, portrayal of the aged was no problem in Israeli media.

In at least one workshop, participants went on record against anything that might isolate old people further or make them look like a narrow interest group out only for itself. Improving the lot of the aged was thought to involve giving as well as getting.

The question how special and how uniform the interests of the aged are was taken up, by implication, in one workshop which discussed the prospects for publications addressed to old people. A reporter from a daily paper thought the old did not have enough needs peculiar to themselves, and varied too much in their characteristics, to allow successful operation of such a magazine; a number of participants said they probably would not want to invest in one. The opposed view was strongly championed by a publishing executive whose organization is actually producing a periodical for the aged.

THE SELF-IMAGE OF THE AGED

In at least half the workshops, it was argued that old people were too ready to accept what was thought to be society's low esteem--that they had themselves to blame for the way they were treated. "Old people are just as guilty of ageism as the young," said one older participant. Another declared: "We discriminate against ourselves...We shouldn't care so much about what other people think--we should act the way we feel." A third asserted that "it's the older person himself who cannot accept his getting older" and adopts euphemistic terms and ideas.

This internalized negativism was repeatedly charged to the influence of advertising. "We are victims of the advertisers," an older union representative maintained; "we never see ourselves as potential buyers of anything except cookies, laxatives and false teeth." Someone else said it was difficult for older people to achieve a sense of security, "because we are lashed constantly by the media."

Several workshops concluded that the aged needed to educate themselves or cultivate their sense of self-worth. In one group, former Israeli Premier Golda Meir was singled out as a model of achievement for old people; several others noted "Black Is Beautiful" or the women's movement as examples of conscious changes in self-image. With more sensitivity to information and images, the media might be able to aid the old in overcoming their misconceptions of themselves, it was suggested.

A GROWING POWER

In many workshops, it was strongly felt that the aged were a growing power and could look forward to major changes in their status. They had put themselves on the map, it was said, through organizations like the Gray Panthers, gaining the attention of the media much as racial and ethnic groups and the feminist movement had done before them. Someone referred to a program, sponsored by the Association of Junior Leagues and funded by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, which enlists retired executives, professionals and others to work for improvements in foster care, criminal justice and other areas of social need.

Others stressed that the aged included a high ratio of voters (77 percent, according to one study), and asserted that they had ~~proved their strength~~ at the polls. (The 1977 election victory of Manhattan Borough President Andrew Stein was attributed by one participant to older voters, who turned out despite bad weather in response to his concern with nursing home abuses.) In 1976, declared one older participant, "every politician had planks about the elderly in his platform;" now, he said, "all we have to do is extend this to other facets of life, like the marketplace."

The increasing proportion of persons over 60 in the population (currently 14 percent) was thought to give the aged more--and more recognized--clout with the media. Several participants predicted that "because there are more of us" the media would soon have to deal with the aged on more realistic terms. With fast-growing numbers, the public's ignorance about the problems and power of old people would dissipate, the media would improve their coverage, and TV shows would gradually become less insulting and more empathetic.

GAINING RECOGNITION AS A MARKET

Some participants thought advertising would soon focus more on the growing numbers and disposable income of the over-65 group, or suggested that advertisers be made more aware of this group's purchasing power. Others maintained that such a change had already begun. An advertising woman stated that ad agencies, after long neglecting old people as consumers of anything except laxatives and denture adhesives, had lately felt compelled to give them more attention. Another advertising spokesman noted that the large older audience for evening TV, between 6:00 and 9:00 P.M., was gaining recognition. "If there's a market," he said, "we'll go after it."

After a number of participants suggested demographic studies to document the spending power of the old, it was pointed out that such documentation already exists --for example, in studies by Ogilvy & Mather, Inc., and N. W. Ayer, as well as in an article from the October 1977 Media Decisions, which was distributed as background material at the conference. An advertising representative said there might be some time lag in applying the new demographic data, but ad agencies had become aware of former false emphases. A publisher in the old-age field thought the agencies were currently engaged in translating changed demographic realities into copy concepts; at the present moment, he suggested, the creative people in the agencies were the ones who needed to be reached.

WHO SPEAKS FOR THE AGED?

Although efforts by younger persons on behalf of the aged were welcomed, old people themselves were thought to be the potentially most effective lobby vis-à-vis media, business and government.

One self-styled "angry old man" of 85 urged more effective political organization. Existing groups ought to give up their concentration on merely "amusing" the aged, he declared, and should encourage them to consider their real problems. Another participant said there must be results in the political arena before there can be significant cultural changes in the status of the aged--and, like it or not, politics works through organized interest groups having demonstrable power.

In at least one workshop, it was felt that representation of the aged to date had been too diffuse. It was also argued by some that the aged themselves were not active enough in their representation--witness the fact that most of the spokesmen for the old at the present conference were organization professionals, not necessarily old themselves. But others took this simply as an indication that many aged individuals are in no position to speak for themselves.

One workshop emphasized that organizations of the aged should publicize their conventions more, but elsewhere doubts were voiced whether the media would listen. Someone complained of inadequate attention given to a recent Senior Citizen Council convention, despite the enthusiasm of the 5,500 delegates present and their concern with real issues.

V. HOW TO DO IT BETTER

NEEDED: BETTER LIAISON

Everyone attacks the media, it was observed; but the question is how they and the aged can work with each other to improve the treatment of the latter in the former.

A point repeatedly made was that each side had much to learn about the other's operations, needs, priorities and economic realities. As one participant, a writer, put it: "Our liaison is very primitive." Representatives of the aged said they did not know how to get complaints through to media executives; media people said they did not know who among the aged represented whom, which made it difficult to get representative facts and comprehensive data under deadline pressures.

The discussions now shifted from perceived shortcomings in media attitudes, coverage and imagery to perceived inadequacies in the way the aged and their organizations supply news and information. A media representative said these organizations did not always understand what the media could and could not use. An older participant concurred; he thought too many "gee-whiz" press releases were sent out. On the other hand, said a media representative, when there really is a good story, human-interest or otherwise, the media will want it.

A representative of the aged acknowledged that the news could be distorted through institutional slanting by those who supplied the stories as well as through deadlines or other pressures on journalists.

A participant from the academic field argued that some representatives of the aged were not sufficiently sensitive to work effectively with the media, but this contention was sharply rejected by another academic.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Organizations of the aged were reminded that the media could only assimilate so much and could not be expected to dig out stories from scratch. Therefore, people who handle public information for such organizations should train themselves to submit succinct, interesting packages of news and information and should learn about deadlines and other media limitations. They also should consider carefully in each case which media channel would be most effective: TV with its unbeatable immediacy, or newspapers with their greater depth.

Another essential, it was stressed in several workshops, is to cultivate ongoing relationships with news media and people: local papers, syndicated columnists, free-lance journalists, and, particularly, the news staffs of local radio and TV stations. Local chapters of organizations should be involved as much as possible, it was suggested.

Local coverage in enough places can almost add up to an equivalent of network coverage, a broadcasting representative stated. She explained that stations have public service or public affairs people, who can advise on local requirements for public service announcements and thereby can help to get more such items on the air. NBC now carries announcements of the National Council on the Aging and helps distribute its literature, she added.

In at least two workshops it was emphasized that a great deal depends on having the right spokespersons and letting the media know who they are. They should be knowledgeable about all aspects of old age, should come across as professionals, not well-meaning amateurs, and should show themselves helpful to media people.

Several representatives of the aged said old people and their organizations ought to make more news to gain media attention--for example, by exposing and making a public issue of abuses against the aged poor, or by starting a newsletter on old-age issues addressed to the general public.

PRESSURE TACTICS

Organized pressure on the media appeared to find some disfavor and a good deal of favor among representatives of the aged. Members of one workshop said while they were aware of the role of group pressure in American life, they were not sure whether they would want it used in the cause of the old. Elsewhere, however, it was discussed how the aged might be trained to exert effective pressure. In several instances, forming groups to talk to newspapers, broadcasting stations or advertising agencies was named as the method of choice, and in one, heavier artillery was mounted: It was suggested that renewals of broadcasting licenses held by offending stations be challenged.

Repeatedly, advertising was named as the prime target of group pressure. In two workshops, it was argued that the purchasing power of the old should be fully exploited to influence advertisers. ("We haven't got much time, but we've got money.") In at least two others, calls were heard for boycotting products that

use insulting advertising. It was thought that a well-organized boycott by people over 60 could be effective.

Advertising and media people seemed to agree that such pressures might work. One ad man acknowledged that purchasing power was what counted on Madison Avenue; another said if market intelligence and sales indicated that a market existed, and the market then brought pressure, media imagery would change.

In one workshop, two broadcasting representatives noted that special interest groups often exerted a strong effect and had been known to change networks' views of what the audience wanted--even in the face of conflicting demographic and marketing data. (This happened, for example, with the PTA crusade against violence on TV.) But they added that this sort of clout was often diminished by differences of opinion within the interest group itself. For example, they recalled, a homosexual character in the comedy "Soap" evoked both pro and con letters from the gay community, in about equal numbers.

SHOULD THERE BE GUIDELINES?

Relatively little attention was paid to the question whether there should be explicit standards for fair, balanced treatment of the aged and their concerns, such as were widely adopted years ago in reporting racial issues. One broadcasting programmer said the industry was trying to find the right balance between the interests of the young and the old and was looking for some sort of guidance; but when it came to formalized standards, most opinions were negative.

In several groups, both sides felt that guidelines, in advertising or elsewhere, would be too rigid and therefore self-defeating, or that media people did not need a formal stamp of approval and knew enough to turn to experts when they needed guidance. In one workshop, the media representatives unanimously declared, "We are opposed to all guidelines," and the representatives of the aged concurred, saying: "The best thing is to have good, decent editors; else you just can't win."

MONITORING AND FEEDBACK

While media people generally had no use for a priori guidelines, they approved of feedback as a way to influence program content. One of them welcomed organizations of the aged who come to make their wishes known in a responsible manner; another asked that they point out what they like in the media and in advertising, as well as what they dislike; and a third suggested that the Gray Panther Media Watch be more widely publicized, so that it could acquire influence comparable to the PTAs' rating system.

A broadcasting representative attributed the effectiveness of the Gray Panthers to the fact that they had approached the suppliers of objectionable programs, not just the networks. In this connection, it was suggested that the media inform the organizations of the aged on how networks, newspapers, magazines and ad agencies could best be approached with suggestions for changes. As one TV executive put it: "The television industry is very responsive--but you have to grab it by both lapels."

An unnamed group on the West Coast was commended for offering input to the TV industry when so requested, in what was considered an unobtrusive but helpful manner.

It was also suggested that the concerns of the aged be brought to the attention of the advertising trade press, that commercials be rated, naming advertisers and ad agencies, and that examples of satisfactory treatment of the aged in advertising be collected and publicized.

WHO SHOULD DO THE REPORTING?

Opinions differed on whether reporting the concerns of the aged could be done well by anyone but an old person, and whether it should be a specialist's job.

In one workshop, the older people at first favored the idea of old reporters, but changed their minds when a young participant demonstrated that she had adequate educational qualifications for the job. However, both the old people and the media representatives in the group remained firmly opposed to reporting by specialists, on the grounds that it would put old people outside the mainstream. Instead, they thought, stories about the old might be assigned to a few designated general reporters on each staff.

In at least two other workshops, some participants contended that the demographic variety and the varying interests of the aged made specialized reporting inadvisable or impracticable. But in one of them, the opposite view was stated with equal vigor. The press and broadcasting representatives felt the problems were too broad and ramified to be handled by one specialist, but the old people thought a capable, committed reporter could master the field through practical, nine-to-five exposure just as he or she would any other subject area. If the concerns of the old were simply subsumed under large categories like Social Security, health or housing, they said, reporters would not be able to focus on the needs of the aged frequently enough.

A member of the Columbia School of Journalism faculty said in one workshop that reporting on the aged was "not a bad beat" for future journalists--that it was neither a dead-end specialty nor second-rate in any way. The student reporter of the workshop concurred.

MORE CONFERENCES LIKE THIS ONE

In at least four workshops and in the closing plenary, it was noted that holding conferences like the present one seemed to be a promising tactic to heighten awareness of the aged and their concerns. The present broad-gauge conference might be replicated in other cities, it was proposed, or specialized meetings for the benefit of particular target groups might be held.

In two workshops, the advertising industry was singled out as being most in need of such clarification, and in a third, a participant from the advertising field predicted that the media would change in response to pressures like that exerted at the present meeting. In the closing plenary, an ad man commended the idea and suggested that representatives of the aged come prepared with a well-documented list of grievances.

HIGHLIGHTS OF DISCUSSIONS

- * Representatives of the aged seemed strongly dissatisfied with the portrayal of old age in the media, and disagreed with poll results suggesting that old people generally found it satisfactory. More recognition of the dignity, productivity and humanity of the aged was called for.
- * Print media were rated better than TV, soap opera better than other TV formats. TV commercials rated worst, despite some recent improvement.
- * Media were accused of ignoring old people or stereotyping them as stubborn, confused, directionless, out of touch, indigent, sickly and sexless.
- * Euphemisms like "golden age" and "sunset years" were found distasteful.
- * Coverage of matters concerning the aged was thought superficial. It was felt the media should do a more thorough job explaining Medicare and Social Security, and pay more attention to the housing problems of the old, to money-saving opportunities, health and retirement.
- * Most representatives of the aged thought advertising neglected older Americans as a large, potentially lucrative market. Advertising people present said this was beginning to change.
- * Media shortcomings were attributed primarily to our youth-obsessed society. However, the youth cult was expected to yield before long to demographic trends.
- * Old people were thought to be too ready to accept the low esteem shown to them in the media and society. The media could help remedy this, it was suggested.
- * Both media people and old people thought the growing numerical, organizational and political strength of the aged would make for improved media coverage.
- * While the aged are becoming a distinct interest group, they also want to be treated and portrayed as an integral part of the society.
- * Media people said organizations representing the aged needed to become more expert in choosing the right media, preparing information for them, and cultivating relationships with media people, especially at the local level.
- * Pressure tactics against media shortcomings found a certain amount of favor among representatives of the aged. Boycotts against offending advertisers were suggested by some, and some media and advertising people thought they might work.
- * Possible formal guidelines for fair treatment of the aged were not much discussed and did not find much favor. Feedback as a method of influencing program content was welcomed by media people. Opinions differed on whether reporting on the old should be a specialty or a function for general reporters.
- * Conferences like the present one were thought a promising tactic for heightening public awareness of the aged and their concerns, particularly in advertising.

ON STEREOTYPES AND NEWS PRACTICES: USES AND MISUSES OF BOTH

Abstract of Presentation by

W. PHILLIPS DAVISON

This meeting is concerned not so much with the fleeting images of aged individuals in the media as with stereotypes, i.e., relatively enduring sets of characteristics attributed to whole categories of persons ("typical" Frenchmen) or of things ("typical" Hollywood movies).

Walter Lippmann first designated our mental pictures of the world as "stereotypes" --a term literally meaning a one-piece printing plate in which, once it is cast, no part can be changed. The term soon became derogatory; social scientists found that stereotypes usually were oversimplified, at least partly inaccurate, often acquired at second hand and resistant to change.

But researchers also found that stereotypes could be useful, and could serve us in at least four ways: They (1) summarize what we know about a particular category of people or things; (2) help us decide how to act toward this category; (3) protect our self-esteem, and (4) give expression to our values. Each of these four functions may have positive or negative implications.

(1) The knowledge-summarizing function of stereotypes was described by Lippmann in his Public Opinion (1922) as a form of economy: "...Modern life is hurried... There is neither time nor opportunity for intimate acquaintance. Instead we notice a trait which marks a well-known type, and fill in the rest of the picture by means of stereotypes we carry about in our heads..." The content of the stereotypes can be reasonably accurate, entirely false, or somewhere between.

(2) As guides to behavior, stereotypes may be useful (e.g., the more or less accurate image of Englishmen as reserved and valuing privacy), or they may embroil us in difficulties (e.g., the false notion of rural dwellers as stupid bumpkins).

(3) As protectors of self-esteem, or ego defenders, stereotypes can be extremely destructive. Majority groups frequently project their weaknesses on minorities, as in anti-black and anti-Semitic prejudice (Gordon Allport). On the other hand, the stereotypes which social and ethnic groups have of themselves, though not necessarily accurate, can promote warm in-group feelings (as in the case of the good-natured jokes Scots tell about their own alleged parsimony).

(4) In their value-expressing functions, stereotypes can express contempt (as in the image of the "pointy-headed" do-gooder, or in many unpleasant ethnic jokes); or they can reinforce values like patriotism or freedom (as in the pictures of the Founding Fathers, the frontiersman, or the "noble savage" of the Enlightenment).

Thus, the problem is not to try to rid oneself of all stereotypes, but "to strengthen one's ability to differentiate among them, and handle their impact with critical power" (Allport)--opposing those that are socially destructive, while tolerating

the socially useful ones (or even regarding them with affection) as long as they do not cloud our thinking.

To turn to news practices, it must be recognized that, like the rest of us, journalists (as well as artists, writers of stories and producers of entertainment) see the world partly in terms of stereotypes. During the early 1920s, when radical men were thought to be recognizable by their beards and radical women by their short hair, Lippmann described what was likely to happen when a reporter covered a radical meeting: "If there are two bobbed heads and four beards in the audience, it will be a bobbed and bearded audience..."

In actual fact, news people probably are somewhat less prone to stereotyping than are most others; their sins of omission and commission simply are more visible. In any case, even stereotyped reporting can be useful in that it makes us aware of prejudices common in our society. The press does not invent these patterns of thinking; it reflects them.

Still, even if they don't invent prejudices, the media often reinforce them, "making things worse than they are" (James Reston). Stereotypes, like any concept, theory or slogan, are magnified and perpetuated through the press and entertainment. Thus, until recently, entertainment programs nearly always represented villains and miscreants as minority group members; the press rarely reported minority group news unless there was a crime or comedy angle. This pattern was finally broken by a major effort (in which the media participated)--to the point where at least one moviemaker complains that he does not dare cast anyone but a Yankee type as a villain.

One reason the media perpetuate stereotypes is that they feed on themselves and on each other. A sensational news story in one medium is picked up by others, and details are frantically sought to keep it alive as long as possible. A successful entertainment program will continue as long as the public will stomach it, and competitors will devise similar programs. As the cycle goes on, the stereotypes and slogans become more and more crass and simplistic. Robert MacNeil, in *The People Machine*, cites an episode during the 1963 school integration fight in Alabama as a classic example of how the same ideas are tossed back and forth between national news channels and reporters in the field.

If the public is to see people and events freshly and accurately, the media must not focus so much of their resources on so limited a range of facts and ideas. Here is one consideration that may help bring about needed change: People and groups appear less stereotyped when they state their own case in the media than when a reporter or editor states it for them (or so research suggests); events are described in less stereotyped fashion by participants than by observers. The example of the black and Spanish-speaking communities in New York shows that the picture is fuller and more differentiated when people talk through the media than when they are talked about by the media. Thus, to get a richer, more accurate picture of old age, we may have to find ways of giving old people more direct access to the media.

A final caution: Even if stereotyping in the media is replaced by a full and fair picture, the chances are that each person will still find support for his or her stereotyped notions in what is presented, for humans have an impressive ability to perceive selectively. Such images, once established in our heads, are extraordinarily persistent.

THE MEDIA AND THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

Abstract of Presentation by

NELSON H. CRUIKSHANK

Stereotypes are not the main problem old people have with the media today. Indeed, other sources can be blamed as much as the media for perpetuating stereotypes of the aged. In a survey by Louis Harris for the National Council on Aging, 68 percent of respondents thought the print media gave a fair picture of old age. Radio was thought fair by 51 percent, television by 79 percent.

True, there is an image problem in commercials where relations between the sexes are concerned; but then both the aged themselves and others have always treated old-age sexuality with a degree of levity. Even the Bible tells the story of King David's old age with what seems like a wink and a nod.

True, too, commercials tend to glorify youth at the expense of older people and to overlook the kind of beauty found in, say, an aged needleworker's gnarled hands. The skill required to bring out beauty of this sort is sometimes found in print and on TV features, but rarely in commercials.

Still, these are exceptions. By and large, the electronic media portray the aged with dignity and compassion. The real problem the aged have with the media is not imagery but unsatisfactory reporting of issues that concern them.

The First Amendment, which keeps the press free from government control, was meant to protect the people's right to know. By implication, it obligates the media to report issues accurately and interpret them meaningfully. But the media often prefer to make money through reporting what is merely entertaining.

Nowhere is this more true than with respect to Social Security--the world's largest insurance operation. Social Security pays out some \$200 million in benefits each day; with old age, Medicare and survivors' benefits totaling \$93.3 billion this year, it runs a close second to defense, the top item in the Federal budget. Contributors number 110 million, beneficiaries 33 million--one American in every seven. Two-thirds of the latter are retired, but the system is also the world's largest student aid program, paying out \$1.25 million a day for this purpose.

The media have a dismal record in reporting on Social Security. Most often, they focus on shortcomings and inequities (for example, as between men and women), scaring and confusing some people to the point where they believe they will not get their benefits. Reporters and columnists trying to do a better job bringing out the facts often have a hard time holding their own against the scare stories.

Misleading information about Social Security is often impossible to refute effectively. Thus, in 1975, the Chicago Daily News featured a series entitled "Social Security: The Fraud in Your Future," which was a mass of distortions and unfounded allegations. The series was syndicated to some 300 papers; a rebuttal commissioned by the Social Security Administration from former Health, Education and Welfare

Secretary Wilbur J. Cohen, the "father of Social Security legislation," was picked up by only about 20.

Also in 1975, NBC aired a documentary on Social Security devoted almost entirely to claims that taxes paid in were too high and payouts too low--the implication being that without Social Security we would have no troubles. Social Security may not be free from flaws, but its existence is not what causes the problems in providing continuing income for the aged. These problems stem from our sluggish economy; and that this is so is only beginning to be reflected in the reporting of current efforts to strengthen Social Security.

The media have long been blasting away at Social Security, claiming it is going broke and laying the blame on Congress. But now that Congress is trying to pass legislation broadening the base and raising the contribution rate to keep up benefits, what are the media doing? They stress that increases up to 196 percent are being proposed for the top income brackets--not that increases for middle incomes would run only about 21 percent. Nor do they mention that benefits would also grow. They dwell on the projected 96 percent increase in the cost of the system, but never acknowledge that all insurance has gone up at similar rates.

The Social Security tax is often attacked as regressive (though it is much less so than private life insurance, where rich and poor pay the same premiums). Yet when it is proposed to make the tax still less regressive by charging the rich more, the media break out in cries of dismay.

Also often misinterpreted is the rule that persons on Social Security may earn only up to \$3,000 a year and still collect their full benefits. It would seem only reasonable that to qualify for retirement benefits you really must be retired, with less income than in your working days. You cannot expect to go on working and also receive benefits to compensate you for not working. This principle is accepted as a matter of course in private pension plans; but Social Security's \$3,000 rule is scored by the media as an "earnings limit," and newspapers ask, simplistically, why a ceiling should be put on earnings and not on dividends.

Then again, it is asserted that Social Security is "not really insurance," because, as the Washington Post once put it, one does not necessarily get back what one pays in. But of course neither does one with a private insurance policy. Insurance is a way of paying for protection, not a bank account. What would readers say if such careless reporting were done in sports--if, say, Billie Jean King were billed as heavyweight champion?

Somehow, the Social Security system must find a way to inform the public more accurately. No doubt the media will call it propaganda; they often do when government bureaus try to tell their story, and often they are right. Still, if the media don't do their job, they must not be surprised if government agencies do their own reporting.

A closing word to the media: Get the facts from the proper sources. That will make fewer sensational stories, but it will help the press fulfill its proper function in a democratic society.

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Office of the President

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS, inc.

43 WEST 57TH STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10019

(212) 688-7530

May 19, 1978

Mr. A. T. Spaulding
1608 Lincoln Street
Durham, North Carolina 27701

Dear Asa:

I can't tell you how delighted I am that you are going to be one of two recipients of our 50th Anniversary Brotherhood Citation Awards at the Durham area dinner on June 1st. Such a high honor could not have come to a more wonderful, beautiful, truly magnificent person, and I am absolutely delighted that you are receiving this award in recognition of your long, devoted and selfless service to our organization.

It has been and continues to be a privilege and honor to work with you and beside you in our important efforts.

Warmest regards,


David Hyatt

DH:es

BUILDING FOR BROTHERHOOD

OTHER SAYINGS OF Mr. Spaulding:

There can be no orderly society without discipline; however, order maintained by force alone is transitory.

The greater the internal discipline, the less the need for external discipline. This applies equally well to the individual, the family, the society, the nation, and the world.

While others may turn on the switch, there is no motivation quite as powerful and enduring as that which is self-generating.

He who is plenteously provided for from within needs but little from without.

The strongest and most enduring cohesive quality available to a society is love for one another.

Response of
Asa T. Spaulding, Sr.,
Recipient of the
50TH Anniversary
Brotherhood Citation Award

Given by the Durham-area Chapter of the
National Conference of Christians and Jews

at the

Governor's Inn

Durham, North Carolina

Additional copies may be secured by sending
an addressed envelope with postage to:

Post Office Box 3804
Durham, N. C. 27702

June 1, 1978

Printed in the August 3, 1978
Congressional Record--Senate,
pages S12551-52

RESPONSE OF ASA T. SPAULDING, SR.,
RECIPIENT OF THE 50th ANNIVERSARY
BROTHERHOOD CITATION AWARD
GIVEN BY THE DURHAM-AREA CHAPTER OF
THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS
AND JEWS AT THE GOVERNOR'S INN, DURHAM,
N.C., JUNE 1, 1978

Mr. Chairman; Mrs. Smith, I do not think I could be with a more appropriate person on such a fitting occasion than with you; Mayor Evans, and you will always be "Mayor" to me; Congressman Brooks Hays; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen:

Although I have witnessed many wonderful experiences before, I think of none in which I was personally involved that has been more deeply and humbly moving than the honor you have done me tonight.

In a time when our community, our state, our nation, and so many other parts of the world are in anything but a happy mood; and when many deep divisions are rampant, Christians and Jews are assembled under the canopy of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man here tonight to pay homage to two persons of opposite races and faiths; one a Jew and female, and the other a black Christian and male.

Both belong to different minorities, but with more or less common experiences. Both know what it is to be rejected, discriminated against, and persecuted; and to whom the word "Holocaust" has a special meaning, even if in different degrees.

While sitting here tonight, I have had many flashbacks to my boyhood on a farm in Columbus County, N.C., unable to attend school more than approximately 4½ months per year until finishing 7th grade at age 16. With no further educational opportunities available to blacks in that county at that time, I came to Durham to further my education.

Five years later, with a high school diploma, I was back in Columbus County serving as principal of the school I had previously attended.

Another flashback focused on my following a plow behind a mule from age 9 to age 16, wondering all that time if I would ever get away from that way of life. Nevertheless, I was constantly dreaming impossible dreams which I have continued to do until this day, and most of them have ultimately become realized.

Not only did I have flashbacks, I also had brief kaleidoscopic views of thousands of years of history, the rise and fall of nations, kingdoms, empires, and civilizations, to flash through my mind in rapid succession.

The most significant recollection, however, was of my grandfather who was a Sunday School superintendent for 42 years, and who inspired me to read the Bible through, both the Old and the New Testaments, before I was age 14. The result was the Bible became my guiding compass giving direction to, and shaping the philosophy of my life.

It was from the Bible that I learned that one of God's greatest gifts to man is the power of overcoming; and of becoming; and that when one is in a state of hopelessness and despair with mountains of difficulties on both sides, enemies pursuing from behind, and a Red Sea of impossibility in front, the way of overcoming is not in self-pity, complaining, and giving up, but rather in drawing upon all of his or her resources, inner and outer, and using the rod in his hand and the will and determination in his or her heart, and to march forward never doubting the outcome. And to continue to march until all the walls of Jericho collapse. He who is plentifully provided for within, needs less from without.

It was in the Bible that I read: Come with me Abraham, and I will make of thee a great nation. . . . Follow me Peter and John, and I will make you fishers of men. . . . Go down into Egypt Moses, and I will make of you a great leader. . . . That obedience is better than sacrifice. . . . That being merciful is better than exploitation. . . . That a pure heart is better than a vile one. . . . That being a peacemaker is better than being a peacebreaker. . . . and that it is in unselfish service that true greatness is found!

In Psalms 1, I found the recipe for good living, and in Psalms 23, I learned the value of a Good Shepherd. For me, the Holy Bible is still the Book of books.

I owe so much to so many because I am but the sum total of all my contacts, experiences, and exposures, and many have contributed much to all of these, both known and unknown. Even though I realize how hazardous it is to start calling names, in addition to my wife and family, for what they have meant to me, there are at least six other persons I must single out, namely:

1. Dr. A. M. Moore, who was born in Columbus County also, and who was responsible for my coming to Durham to continue my education, and for my first summer clerical job at the N. C. Mutual Life Insurance Company while in high school, and his wife who was my other mother after my coming to Durham at age 16.

It was my first summer job at N. C. Mutual that I learned that there is a wide range between the minimum requirements for holding a job and the maximum possibilities of that job, and that any job or

position will expand or shrink to the size of the person holding it, largely depending upon the initiative, imagination, industry, commitment, and perseverance of the person.

2. Dr. James E. Shepard, President of the then National Training School and now North Carolina Central University, who was responsible for my having such a high regard for punctuality, discipline, and the importance of time and its wise use.

3 & 4. C. C. Spaulding, Sr., and W. J. Kennedy, Jr., former Presidents of North Carolina Mutual and mentors of mine who also made a tremendous impact upon my life.

5. Saul B. Ackerman, a Jewish Professor of mine in the School of Commerce, Accounts and Finance at New York University, who took such a personal interest in me, the only black in my class under him, that he changed the course of my life from becoming a CPA to becoming an Actuary by saying to me in his office after class one day: "Spaulding, I would like to make you the first Negro Actuary in America!" Such a thought had never previously entered my mind—the Actuarial field was such a tightly closed profession at that time.

6. Horace R. Bassford, Actuary of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, who permitted me to visit the home office of the Metropolitan, after having finished my Actuarial training at the University of Michigan, to do some special research there at a time when there were no black employees in the home office on any level.

When I went to the Greenbrier Hotel at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, to attend my first meeting of the Actuarial Society, I was such an oddity upon my arrival that the black doormen would not take my luggage out of the car until after I had checked in the hotel, they were so certain that I would not be admitted. I was told that no black had ever stopped there before.

Within a few minutes after I had registered, the news had spread so rapidly that it seemed as though all the blacks in town knew it and wanted to see me. I was extended an invitation in town to dinner that night to tell them about my experience.

When the first session of the meeting recessed for lunch in the dining room of the hotel, Mr. Bassford invited me to sit with him at the Metropolitan table and introduced me to others during the lunch period. After he had "broken the ice", there were no further problems for the remainder of the sessions.

What is of more importance, however, I believe, is that on such an occasion as this it would be remiss not to look back to November 19, 1977 when one of

Abraham's descendants, the Arab, Anwar Sadat, was possessed with a "passion for peace," and at the same time in Israel another descendant of Abraham, a Jew, Menachem Begin, had similar concerns, and "the fullness of time" seemed to be at hand.

So President Sadat left Cairo with the courage of a martyr on his "mission for peace" not knowing what the consequences of his act might be. Would it be a Cain and Abel confrontation or an Esau and Jacob reunion? The world was waiting to see! In the meantime, God was moving in mysterious ways in performing his wonders.

When the door of President Sadat's plane was opened upon his arrival, and he descended the steps, he found Prime Minister Begin and his Cabinet waiting to greet him with open arms of goodwill. This was a high moment of history in the Middle East which radiated electrifying emotions around the world. Two former enemy descendants of Abraham had just pinpointed a new historical landmark in the Middle East. Would it become a new Memorial Plot in which the seeds of Peace and Goodwill had been planted and would germinate, grow up, and bring forth the harvest of Peace in the Middle East for which the souls of mankind longed?

Ere long there were indications that the seeds of Peace and Goodwill might be germinating, for President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin joined in the chant: "No More Wars! No More Wars!" God grant that the seeds planted may flourish and bring forth the desired harvest despite the efforts of dissidents to the contrary.

It is admitted that this will not be easy. Long and tedious negotiations lie ahead. But the alternatives are unthinkable. All of us should, therefore, encourage and uphold the arms of President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin, and urge them to "keep the faith," and not to grow weary in well doing! They have gone too far forward to turn back. The fate of humanity could be hanging perilously upon their succeeding.

The era of beating swords into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks, nations not lifting up swords against nations, and the lion and the lamb lying down together with universal human rights for everyone, must come if universal peace is ever to prevail. It might help for us to remember what a former Ambassador from Israel, Avraham Harman, said in a Brotherhood Day Address at the White Rock Baptist Church in Durham approximately 15 years ago: "It is not given to anyone alone to begin and complete the truly great tasks of life, but an opportunity is afforded to everyone to make his or her contribution toward the completion." May we not be "weighed in the balance and found wanting!"

National Interfaith



Coalition On Aging

Project-GIST (Gerontology in Seminary Training)

March 16, 1979

To all Conference Participants, Eighth Annual NICA Meeting
April 9th & 10th, 1979, Nashville, Tennessee

Dear Friends:

Attached to this letter is a copy of the Program Prospectus and its attachments. Please read this material carefully in preparation for the meeting and bring it with you when you come.

Much remains to be done in final preparation for our meeting by the NICA Staff and Board Members. We covet your prayers on our behalf. We greatly value your involvement in this important Conference and look forward to seeing you in Nashville.

Sincerely,

Thomas C. Cook, Jr.
Executive Director

cc: Dr. Wayne Lindecker, Chairman, Eighth Annual Conference Planning Committee

Committee Members:

Rev. Andrew White
Dr. Paul Adkins
Dr. Horace L. Kerr (SBC)
Mrs. Sophie B. Engel
Dr. Donald F. Clingan

Lt. Col. Mary E. Verner, Advisory
Donna L. McGinty, Staff Associate

**NICA MEETING
PROSPECTUS
ATTACHED**

bring to Nashville!

NATIONAL INTERFAITH COALITION ON AGING, INC.

PROGRAM PROSPECTUS

Eighth Annual Meeting
April 9-10, 1979
Nashville, Tennessee

Theme: "INTERPRETING RELIGIOUS VALUE DIRECTIVES FOR AGING IN THE 1980'S"

With this meeting, the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging, Inc. is entering its eighth year of life as a voluntary, non-profit, religious and educational organization. Organized following the 1971 White House Conference on Aging, it has met many of its objectives and commitments in responding to the recommendations of that important focus. Ample written and other testimony attests to its accomplishments and to the superb cooperation and collaboration of a vast number of denominational agencies and their representatives in becoming part of one of the most important joint efforts existing in the religious sector.

Its original and continuing primary objectives are:

To identify and give priority to those programs and services for the aging which best may be implemented through the resources of the nation's religious sector;

To vitalize and develop the role of church and synagogue with respect to their responsibility in improving the quality of life for the aging;

To stimulate cooperative and coordinated action between the nation's religious sector and national secular private and public organizations and agencies whose programs and services relate to the welfare and dignity of older persons;

To encourage the aging to continue giving to society from the wealth of their experience and to remain active participants in community life.

At its second Annual Meeting, the Coalition dealt with crucial matters of philosophy and purpose, structure and function and chose to be a high-level, relatively small organization, operating principally at the national level, rather than becoming just another membership group. The intervening years have proved this to be a wise choice. Now, however, with a track record of integrity and credible operation, others, including congregations, interfaith groups and individuals wish, in some way, to be a more active part of NICA, both in supporting its objectives and in becoming an integral part of its collective thinking and work.

Funding of the Coalition, in view of its objectives, has been consistently inadequate. A small, hard-working office staff with a steady output of work, projects, conferences and information has been able to function on a continuous basis since 1973 because of a combination of grant funds, membership and relationship fees, conference income and a large amount of contributed time and other resources from a number of very dedicated individuals and agencies. We have moved from a "secretariat" plus project operation to a full-time office consolidating grant and other activities in one location under

one administration. Many have voiced the need for more balance between private sector money, including contributions and fees of members, and federal project funds. The day must come when NICA can, if necessary, be entirely supported by its own constituency, at least to the extent of a full-time core administrative office operation.

Membership in NICA is more solid and supportive at this time than ever before. There is a need, however, to enlist other denominations and agencies and to strengthen our ties and to add representation from existing member organizations, to be able to truly communicate with more policy and decision-makers in the religious community.

The spiritual well-being definition, drafted and adopted in 1975 by NICA, has served as a touch-stone for much of the work we have done. This definition should instruct us as we seek to outline the religious sector's role in the 1981 White House Conference on Aging. The 1977 Intra-decade Conference on Spiritual Well-being of the Elderly was a direct and positive response to the final recommendation of its section on Spiritual Well-being. During the Intra-decade Conference, more than 70 papers were presented. A book entitled, "The Spiritual Well-being of the Elderly," is currently in preparation at Charles C. Thomas Publishing House and is expected to be released later this year. Educational concerns for aging have led the Coalition to study, plan and design an outstanding project, called "Gerontology in Seminary Training" (GIST), in which 60 projects in curriculum development, courses and workshops are being conducted. The NICA Board has identified gerontological education as a major gap and as the most promising area for long and short range development.

NICA has come of age, so to speak, at a most propitious time. Some denominations report 25% or more of their members over the age of 65. With inflation and increasing longevity bringing both bane and blessing, the church and synagogue sector must be aware of its older people and their real needs. We must speak from the standpoint of our traditions and the values inherent in our faith and scriptures. This must be communicated to older persons themselves well as to the nation. The role we have is one that we must re-examine in these two days of intensive discussion.

Central Purpose of the Eighth Annual Meeting

The Conference, with its task group sessions and plenaries, is invitational in nature, to call for those individuals who represent various denominations, organizations or agencies and who possess the interest, commitment, expertise and experience that will assist NICA in looking ahead to the decade before us.

The theme title, "Interpreting Religious Value Directives for Involvement in Aging in the 1980's," is just what we hope to do. It is the value systems, traditions, and scriptures from the Judeo-Christian heritage that must be related to and applied to the real life context of older persons--a focus that gives NICA its unique place in the field of aging. Without such religious, moral and ethical values, we can say no more than any other agency, be it public or private. Our concern, therefore, is to examine aging in the light of this backdrop, to derive our most appropriate role and the emerging mandates and objectives for services and ministry to and with older persons in the next ten years.

Two Task Areas--

Two areas will be addressed during the Conference:

(1.) What should the religious sector's role be in the forthcoming 1981 White House

Conference on Aging? and;

- (2.) What direction should the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging take in the next ten years?

The 1981 White House Conference on Aging (WHCA).

NICA did not exist prior to the 1971 WHCA, but emerged from it. Many persons involved in creating NICA were present at the 1971 WHCA, or were deeply involved in various state and local pre-WHCA hearings and activities. As a new organization, NICA made its first motto, "Toward a Vital Response to the 1971 White House Conference on Aging." As a result, it sought to answer, over a period of years, each of the fifteen major recommendations of the section on spiritual well-being of the elderly. This report is found in the appendix of the 1976 Survey Report entitled, "The Religious Sector Explores its Mission in Aging." Other concerns, beyond those recommendations of the Spiritual Well-being section, were also addressed. This raises crucial questions of whether the religious sector's responses to the 1981 WHCA should all be in a section concerning spiritual well-being or distributed, for balanced input, throughout the concerns area of the Conference. NICA has sparked a wave of concerned letters to Commissioner Robert Benedict, of the Administration on Aging, because of the omission of spiritual well-being, or its equivalent, in the specific concerns areas called for in the legislation which authorized the 1981 WHCA. We have been assured that this is only an oversight. Nevertheless, specific thrust in that area is needed and must be planned.

Directions for NICA in the Next Ten Years.

This task group will deal with a number of very important questions that need input, thought and careful recommendations. We must answer such questions as: "Should NICA change its structure and function (see attached statements) to provide for broader involvement of individuals and local congregations?" "What is a responsible financial base for NICA, other than, or apart from, grant funds for projects and what should such basic funding cover?" and "What kinds of activities and services should NICA be engaged in to serve the religious sector appropriately and effectively in the decade ahead?" Additional questions have been solicited from member organizational representatives and will be available to task group leaders at the Conference, along with a number of resource documents which will be of use to both task groups.

Conference Design and Process.

The tentative agenda below indicates the general format and process the Conference is expected to take. Following the Annual Business Meeting session, the meeting is in plenary sessions, task forces and small working groups. Participants will listen, deliberate and submit reports and recommendations to the NICA Board, which will hold an open Board session at the close of the meeting to receive and/or act, as may be appropriate, on recommendations from the task groups. NICA Executive Committee leaders will be involved in steering the small groups.

Tentative Agenda:

NOTE:

1. All sessions to be held in the Educational Conference Center of the Southern Baptist Convention at 127 9th Avenue, North, Nashville, Tennessee.
2. All Conferees must be registered and wear name badges to sessions and meals.

3. Housing is available next door to the Conference Center at the Sheraton Nashville Inn.

Monday, April 9th, 1979

9:00 A.M.: Invocation, Welcome, Greetings and Introductions
State of the Coalition Address, Lt. Col. Mary E. Verner, NICA President
Business Session:

- A. Election and Bylaws changes
- B. Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports
- C. Standing Committee's Reports
- D. Executive Director's report on NICA operations and GIST Project

10:30 A.M.: General Orientation to Task Groups and First Session of Working Groups

12:30 A.M.: "Aging, the Current Situation--- a Candid View."
Mr. William Oriol, Former Staff Director, U.S. Senate Special Committee
on Aging-- Response from NICA Board Member

2:00 P.M.: Task Groups meet again in respective places (First Focus)

3:30 to

5:00 P.M.: Task Groups initiate second Focus Session

6:00 P.M.: Dinner--Presentation and discussion: "The Social Security Administration
and Aging"--
Mr. Robert Bynum, Deputy Commissioner, Social Security Administration
Department of Health Education and Welfare-- Response from NICA Board
Member

7:30 to

8:30 P.M.: Multi-media showings in Ampitheater

TUESDAY, April 10, 1979

8:30 A.M. Plenary Session on Output and Progress.
Dr. Wayne Lindecker

Special Order:

10:00 A.M. Regroup for Specific Recommendations (a hand-out guide sheet will be
distributed.) Rooms, as assigned.

11:00 A.M. Break for Multi-media Presentation: (Task Group Leaders will prepare
recommendations to be presented in the afternoon session)

12:15 Lunch: "A Status Review of the Older Americans Act Options and
Comments on Public and Private Sector Involvement."
Dr. Byron Gold, Administration on Aging, Department of Health
Education and Welfare.--Response from NICA Board Member

2:00 to

3:30 P.M. Convening of the NICA Board of Directors in open session to act on and
receive reports and recommendations.

Closing Remarks of NICA President for 1979-1981

Adjournment

NOTE:

1. Coffee will be available to Conferees during sessions.
2. Time slots are approximate, except for meals and starting times each day.
3. Names of group leaders, chairpersons and respondees will be in program agenda at the meeting.
4. Persons checking out of the Sheraton Inn may check baggage in the lobby or may bring baggage to the Conference Center. We will notify you of the best arrangements during the conference.

Conference Leadership.

Because of the new Older Americans Act Amendments, the planned 1981 White House Conference on Aging and the need for up-to-date information on policy and administrative factors affecting all older Americans, as it relates to our planning, we have scheduled in-put from a number of national leaders, both inside and outside of the current administration. Dr. Byron Gold, of the Administration on Aging, Department of HEW, will provide us with information on current planning for the White House Conference on Aging. He will also deal with Older Americans Act Amendments and the prospects and potential for various programs under those amendments in the coming years.

Mr. William Oriol, former Staff Director of the U. S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, and one of the resource persons present at the founding meeting of NICA, will also be with us to address these and other matters.

The Honorable Mr. Nelson Cruikshank, Counselor to the President on Aging and Chairman of the Federal Council on Aging, has been invited to join us and to speak during a special order session.

Mr. Robert Bynum, Deputy Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, will speak to us regarding important issues affecting the elderly, and other matters currently under consideration by the Social Security Administration.

Lt. Col. Mary E. Verner, NICA President, and National Consultant for the Salvation Army, will deliver a "State of the Coalition" Message to the group.

Members of the Board of Directors of NICA will serve as a Response Panel to react to the special presentations and provide guidance to the deliberations of Task Force working groups.

In an invitational meeting such as this, each person who is invited to participate is considered an important resource person, with his or her own particular point-of-view and expertise to be shared in the deliberations and to influence the recommendations that will be forged out and presented to the Board at the close of the meeting. The meeting is all too brief to accomplish the work we have set out before us. How-

ever, the real work begins when the Board receives the recommendations that will be presented at the afternoon session on Tuesday and refers them to its various working committees.

Conference Follow-up.

Obviously, in two days, much will be generated that will require study, digestion and careful action by the NICA Board during the months that follow. All Conferees will receive minutes of the business meeting and closing session, including recommendations. Future issues of NICA INFORM will carry news of plans, as they develop, for the 1981 White House Conference on Aging involvement and other activities. Most important will be the work of each conferee in his or her "back home" roles in the light of information, stimulation and insights gained through participation in this important event.

AMERICAN JEWISH

Conferees desiring to share with others information regarding your own denominational or agency efforts are encouraged to bring "show-and-tell" items to the Conference. Tables will be made available in the lobby area for you to display such materials. Each table should be able to hold materials from several persons who desire to do this. If this is your desire, check with Ms. Donna McGinty or Mrs. Maretta Carstensen at the Conference registration table.



NICA Statement on Philosophy & Purpose

The National Interfaith Coalition on Aging is an expression of its members' commitment and investment in improving the quality of life for the aging throughout the nation. The Coalition seeks to provide a medium whereby the beliefs and values of its members may be actualized in the identification of the needs of older Americans, of the role of the religious sector in meeting those needs as well as establishing an attitudinal climate that will encourage the older person to retain or achieve participation in community life. Respecting the rich diversity of its membership, the Coalition believes that common spiritual and human concern with the aging person benefits from an ecumenical approach to his role in the community. The Coalition recognizes that the religious sector which its membership represents has a special commitment to the psycho-spiritual dimension of aging, which seeks the activation of the individual, the humanization of technology and the recognition of a Divine rather than a material criterion for assessing human worth.

The Coalition intends to provide data and information that will enable it to:

- 1) Describe what services to the elderly its members are providing,
- 2) Identify the uniquely positive features of these services so they may be used by others concerned with programs for the aged,
- 3) Identify the gaps in program and service for the elderly and discover the measures most likely to close them,
- 4) Devise educational and training programs that may be offered to members in their own programs for the aging and
- 5) To provide the medium whereby common planning and programming for the aging by the religious sector may benefit from interchange at the level of service policy and practice.

As the instrument of the national components of the policy formulating, decision making entities of the religious sector's service delivery systems the Coalition provides an inter-face with policy formulating, decision making entities of the public and private sectors. It exists not to create, but to discover, share and express the values of religious service traditions. Improved service delivery possibilities will be sought therefore in the context of the counsel of general religious and interfaith leadership. The Coalition is committed to the autonomy and integrity of its constituent membership and eschews any form of public funding that 1) supports specifically sectarian activities or 2) limits the freedom of the religious sector or the philosophy and policy of that sector's delivery of service to the aging.

Received and approved as a working document by the Board 11/27/72

As amended and approved by the Board 11/27/72

NICA Statement on Structure & Function

The following statement on Structure and Function was prepared to flow from the companion statement of Philosophy and Purpose as a guide for organizational development in light of NICA objectives and Bylaws.

The two alternative structures (A & B) presented below are only two of many possibilities examined. These two outline the basic strengths, weaknesses and directions inherent in each organizational form.

NICA approved Organizational Structure "A" as its operational formation 11/27/72, with the understanding that future amendments might be required as the situation changed.

Organizational Structure "A"

NATIONAL ONLY, WITH NATIONAL ORGANIZATION CONSTITUENCY.

Characteristics:

1. Relatively small but with representative membership at a high level from constituent organizations.
2. Members look at the total picture for their constituent body and collectively for joint specific activities.

Functions:

1. Policy exploration and influencing
 - a. For constituent members and affiliates
 - b. Government-legislation, administration
2. Research, study
(ability to sub-contract for pilot demonstration programs)
3. Dissemination of information
4. Technical assistance (including assisting the development of coalitions for service at state and local level)
5. Catalytic activities (promotion of involvement producing multiplier effect)
6. No direct services

Organizational Structure "B"

NATIONAL WITH STATE AND LOCAL CONSTITUENCY

Characteristics:

1. Relatively large with state and local membership.

STATEMENT OF STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

Page 2

2. Ability to reach local and state members apart from national bodies

Functions:

1. Includes basic functions of "A" above.
2. National organizational development and maintenance effort of local chapter and state constituency for flow of activity.
3. Concern with service delivery at various levels.

DISCUSSION:

Structure "A" is more in keeping with the initial philosophy and purpose which brought the Coalition into being. Several reasons cited for this are:

1. Structure "A" provides more of an intra-group atmosphere and activity serving the needs of high level policy making, speaking collectively to national objectives, etc. Structure "B" would have more of a tendency to become extra-constituent in some of its activities and could have serious effect on the functioning, voice, and authority of national member bodies. Form "A" can promote agreements at top level that flow through national membership base of constituent organizations to work together at the local level rather than coming through the collective organization outside of constituent member bodies at the denominational or national level. It would be difficult for form "B" to maintain true representation of point of view and objectives of national groups. The tendency would be to parallel the structure of member national church and synagogue groups which could be, in our view, potentially hazardous to our main thrust at the present time.
2. By engaging in service activities other than as outlined in "A", the ability to look at broad policy could be severely compromised and there would be a tendency to bring the organization into conflict with major constituent bodies. Conflict in the form of policy debate is desirable and healthy as an organization looks toward the melding of ideas, but, where you deal with actual programs, conflict is not desirable.
3. Structure "B", which would open the organization up to a much larger and broader membership, would require considerable time and effort to be expended in the mechanics of maintenance of such an organization which could make it difficult to achieve the "lean" objectives of structure "A."

We see no need for any additional sister or separate agency related to NICA as an action arm. We feel that nothing should be incorporated into our organizational structure that would inhibit or compromise our freedom to speak to and among ourselves as well as to our society and governmental structures.

NATIONAL INTERFAITH COALITION ON AGING, INC.

8TH ANNUAL MEETING

April 9-10, 1979, Nashville TN.

THEME:

"INTERPRETING RELIGIOUS VALUE DIRECTIVES FOR AGING IN THE 1980's"

SUPPLEMENTAL PAPER TO PROSPECTUS
FOR THE TASK GROUP ON:

THE RELIGIOUS SECTOR'S ROLE IN THE 1981 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING



This material was developed as a starting point for identification and discussion of issues within the subject area. The Task Group should use it as a point of departure, with members of the group contributing additional issues and their perspectives on how to achieve issue resolution.

Documents Available
for Reference:

1. "Spiritual Well-being," a background paper by David O. Moberg, Ph.D., for the 1971 White House Conference on Aging.
2. "Response Statements to Spiritual Well-being Recommendations of the 1971 White House Conference on Aging," emerging from a NICA meeting in Chicago, 1976. Published as Appendix C of NICA's final report on a survey of programs for the aging under religious auspices, entitled The Religious Sector Explores its Mission in Aging.
3. Spiritual Well-being definition and commentary.
4. Attachment: Discussion Paper for Task Force on NICA's Direction in the Next Ten Years.
5. 8th Annual Meeting Prospectus (mailed or handed to Conferees).

Background and
Current Situation:

Each task Force member has a copy of the Prospectus for NICA's 8th Annual Meeting which contains a background paragraph on NICA's relationship to the 1971 and 1981 WHCAs. Keep in mind that NICA did not exist prior to the 1971 WHCA, but emerged from it and, over a period of years, used the motto "Toward a Vital Response to the 1971 White House Conference on Aging." As one program focus, NICA sought to respond to each of the fifteen major recommendations of the section on spiritual well-being.

In August, 1978, NICA identified the omission of "spiritual well-being" from the list of "great needs" specified in the 1981 White House Conference on Aging Act (S.2850) relevant to America's aging and elderly. In October, 1978, NICA urged its constituency and NICA INFORM readers to respond to the omission of spiritual well-being and, thus, sparked a wave of concerned letters to Commissioner Robert Benedict, Administration on Aging. Since then, NICA has been assured that failure to include spiritual well-being as a great need was an oversight.

In November, 1978 NICA's President and Executive Director attended a Working National Conference on Implementation of the 1978 Amendments to the Older Americans Act. Background material provided the discussion group which considered planning for the 1981 WHCA included this statement: "...to-date AoA has received a number of similar suggestions relating to a proposed Conference mission. The Federal Council on Aging, among others, has advised that such a mission look beyond the traditional governmental and social welfare approach addressed at earlier White House Conferences on Aging and focus on broader societal objectives aimed at inducing social change in private and public institutions of actual or potential importance to a 'greying' America (e.g., government, the media, education, commerce, labor,

during this conference, several of the speakers are expected to include in their addresses up-dated information on the 1981 White House Conference on Aging.

**Key Issues
and Questions:**

1. What activities/issues/agenda should the religious sector engage in during the pre-White House Conference period? (Specific to the religious sector and assuming cooperation with general pre-White House Conference on Aging activities from conference planners). (This includes selection criteria for participants who may be selected to represent religious sector interests and denominational concerns.)
2. What strategies/approaches seem appropriate and viable to assure religious sector concerns are registered (a) with the conference planners, (b) during the conference and (c) in the post-conference materials and follow-up?
3. In the light of the NICA follow-up of the 1971 WHCA, what organized follow-up procedures could we now anticipate and what suggestions can now be made to NICA for more adequate response?
4. Is there a collective ecumenical role for NICA to carry out in the 1981 WHCA, or should NICA seek to merely assist in the greatest variety of denominational representation or both?
5. This 8th Annual Conference theme is: " Interpreting Religious Value Directives for Involvement in Aging in the 1980's." In what way should such values be articulated? (i.e. in Judeo-Christian, general philosophical and ethical, or other terminology? Note: NICA has maintained the need for ecumenical or "inter-faith" vs. "uni-faith" or "non-faith" language. To eliminate the richness of our diverse historical, traditional, scriptural and theological frames of reference is to negate the value systems we represent and would reduce us to a secular humanism at best. Question: in the light of the above and our interaction with public and private non-religious agencies does this indicate a need for a NICA glossary of terms?)

The following concerns, suggestions and questions were sent in response to the Conference planning Committee's request for input from member agency representatives. Further questions are in the other task group's materials attached to this one. Since there is great overlap of concern areas, the grouping below is general and for initial organization only. No attempt has been made to restate the questions or issues.

Related Concerns,
Suggestions and Questions:

STRATEGY

1. Does NICA or any other group have a convincing argument to support recognition and inclusion of the religious sector in the 1981 WHCA?
2. How are the religious forces to impact the 1981 WHCA? Should there be a section on spiritual well-being and religious values for aging or should the religious view permeate the whole conference? If the latter, how?
3. Shouldn't NICA take the initiative to establish a task force on religion, identify goals for the conference and develop an agenda for the task force?
4. What position papers need to be prepared by the religious sector in preparation for the 1981 WHCA?
5. What formats can be developed and implemented that will gather and distribute to the Conference Committee the role(s) of denominations and local religious units in working with older people?
6. What should be done in a state or region to integrate the religious sector into conference planning and to provide input to the preparatory process? For example, how can persons from the religious sector gain appointment to the state delegations?
7. How can some measurement take place that would facilitate or call for a "writing" (monograph, etc.) on the significance of spiritual well-being in the range of factors common to the aging population? (NCOA did not prepare such a monograph after the Harris Poll. Was this due to lack of data?)
8. Who should be invited from the religious sector? Do we see any helpful criteria to assist in selection of participants?
9. How can NICA best act as a "facilitator" vis-a-vis the religious sector's role in the WHCA?

RELIGIOUS VALUES

10. How can the religious sector influence society to replace a negative with a positive image of aging and the older adult?

11. How to deal with interfaith values, conflicts?
12. How to distinguish or clarify religious values as contrasted to cultural values?
13. How can the religious sector give significant stress to the fact that the dignity and worth of persons at any stage of life is derived not from their talents or achievements but from their creation in the image of God?
14. How can the religious sector shift the emphasis in its own life away from service to the elderly to service by the elderly, without neglecting service aspects that are legitimate?
15. Because one cannot separate the spiritual from the attempts to satisfy the physical, material and social needs of an individual, shouldn't spiritual counsel, information and referral and spiritual education be made available at facilities, programs and services for the elderly?
16. How can the Christian part of the religious sector help people face-up-to death in terms of the Gospel--without yielding to fadism or violating the doctrine of resurrection (as distinguished from the immortality of the soul)?

CONFERENCE CONTENT/SERVICE CONCERNS

17. Religious sector's involvement in housing, home health care, building safe and community-centered neighborhoods?
18. Economic projects for the elderly and how the Church can help.
19. How can religious groups be assisted to develop use of surplus facilities, such as unused portions of educational buildings, as small apartment residences for older persons where minimum supervision is required, in order to alleviate the tendency to place all older persons bereft of family in nursing homes?
20. What part can the Church take in mental and physical troubles of the elderly? Could we have more places (churches) that, with help from outside sources, would be able to form church group activities and/or personal counseling?

CHURCH-STATE

21. What about government giving the private, especially religious sector, more opportunity for delivery of services without the problem of "church-state" confusion? For instance, asking religious organizations to assist in SSI recipient location, identification, etc.

22. How may the church and community and state agencies cooperate in older adult work, with the separation of church and state being so prevalent today? Monies are available, but can it be given to the Church to use to keep people in their own homes? Does this have to continue on a voluntary giving basis from the church?
23. Why is it that prayers cannot be said where money is provided by the Title XX for nutrition programs at church centers--a place where people expect prayers?



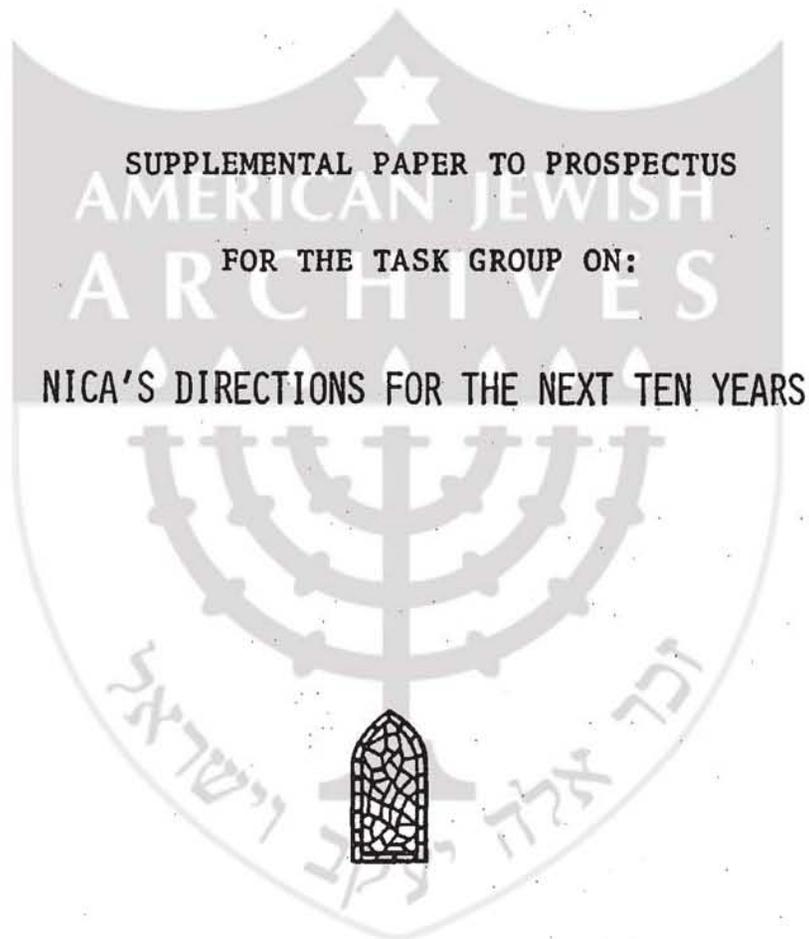
NATIONAL INTERFAITH COALITION ON AGING, INC.

8TH ANNUAL MEETING

April 9-10, 1979, Nashville TN.

THEME:

"INTERPRETING RELIGIOUS VALUE DIRECTIVES FOR AGING IN THE 1980's"



This material was developed as a starting point for identification and discussion of issues within the subject area. The Task Group should use it as a point of departure, with members of the group contributing additional issues and their perspectives on how to achieve issue resolution.

Documents Available
for Reference:

1. NICA Bylaws.
2. NICA MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY.
3. Final Report of a Survey of Aging Programs Under Religious Auspices (NICA R & D Project, 1973-76).
4. Project-GIST (Gerontology in Seminary Training) Information Document (Title IV-A Training PROJECT, 1977-79).
5. 1981 White House Conference on Aging: The involvement of NICA and the religious sector (see attachment).
6. 8th Annual Meeting Prospectus: NICA objectives; statement on philosophy and purpose; statement on structure and function (Mailed or handed to Conferees).
7. Attachment: Discussion Paper for Task Force on 1981 White House Conference on Aging.

Background and
Current Situation:

See 8th Annual Meeting Prospectus. Additional information furnished vis-a-vis the "State of the Coalition" address by Lt. Col. Mary E. Verner, NICA President, and the report of NICA's Executive Director, Thomas C. Cook, Jr.

Key Issues
And Questions:

1. Among the various questions, issues and concerns dealt with at this conference, identify the KEY issues (along with your group's answers/recommendations) that address themselves to the four stated NICA objectives, the Structure and Function or Philosophy and Purpose statements.
2. Identify those key activities/concerns (including 1981 WHCA) recommended by your task group which have short-range (1-3 years), mid range (4-6 years), or long-range, (7-10 years) importance and/or implications. Tag those which have on-going or continuous implications for NICA.
3. What questions and unresolved issues does your task group feel important enough to turn over to the NICA Board for continued study and resolution at some future time? List up to three in order of importance. (May include matters brought up by your task group but unanswerable during the allotted time.)

see over

4. The planning process by the NICA Board will require a number of steps and a variety of input over the next ten years. What suggestions does your task group have for next steps, in follow-through of the work begun here?
5. This Eighth Annual Conference theme is: "Interpreting Religious Value Directives for Involvement in Aging in the 1980's." In what way should such values be articulated? (i.e. in Judeo-Christian, general, philosophical and ethical, or other terminology? Note: NICA has maintained the need for ecumenical or "inter-faith" vs. "uni-faith" or "non-faith" language. To eliminate the richness of our diverse historical, traditional, scriptural and theological frames of reference is to negate the value systems we represent and would reduce us to a secular humanism at best. Question: In the light of the above and our interaction with public and private non-religious agencies, does this indicate a need for a NICA glossary of terms?)



The following concerns, suggestions and questions were sent in response to the Conference planning Committee's request for input from member agency representatives. Further questions are in the other task group's materials attached to this one. Since there is great overlap of concern areas, the grouping below is general and for initial organization only. No attempt has been made to restate the questions or issues.

Related Concerns,
Suggestions and Questions:

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

1. How can NICA broaden its base and increase its funding for regular operating budget?
2. Fundamental is the question of adequate funding for a comprehensive, inclusive coalition which has demonstrated ability to take initiative.
3. How can NICA broaden its base and be enabled as a more effective agency for model development, education and action in the field of aging?
4. Can NICA develop a strong financial base through its membership and the expansion of that membership--enough to cover maintenance budget?

ORGANIZATION, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

5. NICA now needs to carefully decide on its endeavors and priorities, to be certain that we can get overwhelming support from the religious sector.
6. The role of the religious community in aging needs to be clarified vis-a-vis the extensive service programs, both public and private.
7. Based on determined need, what creative program directives should follow Project-GIST?
8. What are the realistic goals, objectives and strategies for NICA?
9. Would it be advisable to develop an Advisory Committee of Distinguished Older Adults from out of the religious sector who will help NICA keep on target in its purposes and programs for and with older adults? (How finance?)
10. Granted that national and community religious forces/leaders are still far short of potential involvement with aging, what practical steps can be taken to secure broader participation of churches and synagogues and their clergy and laity?

11. What means of communication can NICA develop to keep churches alert to needs of older people?
12. Strong consideration should be given to steps necessary to enhance the visibility of NICA nationwide. Too many people in too many places have not heard of NICA.
13. What should NICA do, if anything, in leadership development (vitae files, training, etc.)?
14. What should be the nature of communication and cooperation of NICA with --government --private sector agencies --other aging groups?
15. What basic services should NICA provide constituent bodies, members, government, unrelated interested persons, etc., given its current staffing and funding level--Executive Director, staff associate, secretary/bookkeeper and clerk/typist? (Answer again for an imaginary, expanded staff.)
16. Physical location of NICA.
17. NICA publications desk or department; what should be the initial guidelines and emphases? Should INFORM go out to all interested persons or should its distribution be limited in some way?
18. Annual Meetings: place, time (continue past practice of "piggy backing" on other, larger meetings within aging field?) Focus? Always with an "open" program or sometimes invitation-al?
19. We must keep our eyes on our broad and highly potential constituency and plan how these people of good will and their vast facilities and resources can be more effectively related to aging and the aged.

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

20. How can NICA build on the GIST project to make an effective impact upon gerontology in theological education?
21. Research and disseminate models the churches have used in organizing the elderly at the parish level.
22. Can NICA provide suggested programs for active elderly and the frail elderly?
23. Laymen should be educated re the aspects of aging and how they can work with and for the elderly within their congregations and the community.
24. Pre-retirement training for people in middle years that includes the spiritual as well as the psychological, social, etc. changes that may occur.

25. What are the churches doing to prepare all for death?
26. Can NICA develop special Bible study material which churches might adapt for their own use?
27. The role of the church in long-term care.
28. The role of the church in serving the rural elderly.
29. What can older people do for the church?
30. What opportunities are available in our churches and synagogues where all age groups can have activities together (other than worship)?
31. Church/synagogue involvement in a ministry with the aging should include involvement of the elderly in the planning and development of any such program.
32. After Project-GIST how should the print and AV resources of the GIST library be used? What should be the limitations to avoid possible loss/abuse?
33. What types(s) of research is(are) seen as on-going and/or special?
34. Is there any concern/problem within the religious sector worthy of NICA sponsored special purpose conference?
35. NICA should initiate education programs, service programs, research programs, etc. related to religion and aging. EX: Develop national training programs to assist denominational and local religious bodies.

VALUES/ATTITUDES

36. The church must take a firm stand on the spiritual value of the elderly and help to meet the need of the total person.
37. How can NICA help its participating religious groups take the offensive to change basic concepts of aging and attitudes towards older adults?
38. What are the religious values in relation to aging?

ADVOCACY

39. How can NICA and the religious community become more effective in the advocacy role with respect to the aged?
40. NICA should build a plan for advocacy in behalf of the dignity of older persons, making it possible for them to live all their lives in sharing with the church, synagogue and society.
41. Issue of mobilizing national denominational support for selected aging concerns, especially those in the legislative field.

FOOD POLICY NOTES



INTERRELIGIOUS TASKFORCE ON U.S. FOOD POLICY

GEORGE A. CHAUNCEY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.
CHAIRMAN

NOTE 79-7

April 27, 1979

Statement for the Record by the
Interreligious Taskforce on US Food Policy
on the Elderly Nutrition Programs under the Older Americans Act
submitted to the
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, Education and Welfare
Committee on Appropriations
US House of Representatives
April 23, 1979

The Interreligious Taskforce on US Food Policy is a team of Washington-based staff of national religious agencies, in whose work over two dozen Protestant denominations, and Roman Catholic, Jewish, and ecumenical agencies cooperate. The Taskforce speaks for itself alone, but its witness is consonant with that of major religious bodies in this country. Many of the congregations and synagogues of the religious bodies cooperating in the Taskforce provide nutrition services to older people.

The Taskforce is concerned that the congregate and home-delivered nutrition programs for the elderly, as authorized by the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, receive adequate funding. The Taskforce supports last year's authorized levels of \$430 million for FY 79 and \$475 million for FY 80, which would allow some expansion of nutrition services, specifically in the home-delivered meals program.

If appropriations at this level are not feasible, we urge that you quickly adopt a Supplemental Resolution, as recommended by the House Select Committee on Aging, adding \$75 million for FY 79 to the \$250 million now provided by the Continuing Resolution funding Older Americans Act nutrition programs. We also urge you to appropriate \$100 million in addition to the administration's FY 80 budget proposal of \$277.6 million for elderly nutrition. Under these funding levels, nutrition programs would continue to provide service without substantial reductions in numbers of meals served.

During the 95th Congress, the Taskforce urged the House-Senate Conference Committee to adopt the Senate amendment to the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act which for the first time provided separate, increased funding for home-delivered meals. We are pleased that Congress adopted the amendment. Later, we recommended sufficient appropriations to fund the expansion of the elderly nutrition program. We were disappointed that the 95th Congress did not appropriate the needed increase in authorized funding and instead voted to continue the program at 1978 funding levels. We urge you to approve the FY 79 Supplemental as soon as possible.

As you know, the Continuing Resolution for elderly nutrition programs for FY 79, under which the programs are now operating, sets funding at \$250 million, the appropriation level for FY 78. Given the high rate of inflation generally, and especially in the cost of food, we believe that operating the 1979 elderly nutrition programs at 1978 funding levels is seriously inadequate.

The Administration has proposed a Supplemental Resolution of only \$4.5 million for FY 79 and an increase of \$23.1 million for FY 80. In our view, these proposed supplements are far too low. We also believe that the House Education and Labor Committee recommendations to the Budget Committee are too low to meet minimum needs. We understand that these recommended levels were a supplemental amount of \$63 million in addition to the Continuing Resolution for FY 79, making a total of \$313 million, and \$63 million for FY 80, again making a total of \$313 million.

Further, while we were pleased that the House Budget Committee allowed for an additional \$149 million in the FY 80 budget, we believe that that Committee's request for an FY 79 supplemental of only \$12.5 million is far too low.

According to the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (formerly the National Association of Title VII Project Directors) estimates, unless adequate supplemental funding for FY 79 becomes available by early summer, 1979, elderly nutrition projects may be forced to curtail the number of meals served daily from 563,370 to perhaps 400,000. The Administration on Aging and the National Association of State Units on Aging likewise predict that FY 79 funding levels under the Continuing Resolution could result in "crisis situations" in about a dozen states. We therefore urge you to act quickly in approving supplemental funding for congregate and home-delivered meals.

Two-thirds of participants in the federal elderly nutrition programs have family incomes of less than \$4,000. It is critical that we not cut off services to this vulnerable segment of our poverty population, most of whom are living on fixed incomes which are reduced from pre-retirement earning levels. In our view, funding for elderly nutrition should be a budget priority since for older persons the program can often mean the difference between malnourishment and a well-balanced diet, between isolation and human contact.

Despite the fact that maintaining or expanding elderly nutrition services is expensive, it must not be neglected. Due to inflation, the cost of food rose by about 12.5% in 1978 over 1977, while the Consumer Price Index rose by 9.2% during the same period. Clearly, if federally-funded food programs are going to meet the needs of current participants as well as expand to serve the rapidly growing elderly population; there must be a significant increase in appropriations.

An additional imperative for funding elderly nutrition programs at a minimum of \$75 million supplemental for FY 79 and an additional \$100 million for the FY 80 budget arises from the fact that stricter eligibility requirements in the Food Stamp Act of 1977 have resulted in the elimination of 2% of elderly participants in the food stamp program and a reduction in benefits of \$5 to \$30 per month to 27.5% of elderly households. In our view, it would be unjust to reduce elderly nutrition services because of insufficient funding at a time when food stamps are unavailable for the first time to some poor older persons.

We acknowledge that the Appropriations Committees and the Congress as a whole have difficult choices to make among needs of various sorts which compete for limited resources. However, we feel that even amid the current mood of austerity, it would be tragic to penalize those whose lives are already austere when compared with commonly accepted standards. We therefore urge your support for the nutrition programs mentioned here at the levels indicated.

FOOD POLICY NOTES



INTERRELIGIOUS TASKFORCE ON U.S. FOOD POLICY

GEORGE A. CHAUNCEY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.
CHAIRMAN

NOTE 79-8

NEW PRIORITIES AT USDA?

May 1, 1979

Background

In September, 1978, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released a study entitled Public Policy and the Changing Structure of American Agriculture. One section of this important report discusses six areas in which federal activity has influenced the evolution of agriculture in the 20th century: commodity programs; taxation; agricultural credit; rural development;—research, extension, and information; and environmental protection. According to the CBO, "a major conclusion is that federal policy has on the whole discouraged small farm operations and led to greater concentration in farming."

Most of the programs and policies referred to were initially justified in terms of support for the family farm. And, indeed, they have been of great benefit to many family farms. At the same time, however, they have provided significant incentives, often unintended, to the trends towards fewer and larger farms and greater concentration of control over productive resources.

For many years the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the federal agency in charge of implementing and administering most of these programs, encouraged farmers to "get bigger or get out." But times change, and so do perceptions. Farmers caught up in the expansion syndrome are finding out that not only are they straining the limits, or even surpassing a family scale of operation, but also that increased size is not solving their "cost/price squeeze" problems. Furthermore, the true human and social dimensions of the trend towards fewer, larger farms is coming to light: family farms expand at the expense of their family farm neighbors. And the increased demand for land, contributed to in no small measure by non-farm investors and speculators, has raised the cost of farm entry beyond the means of most young people wishing to make a start in farming.

Policy analysts are also beginning to provide truer accountings of the costs and benefits of these continuing trends. While the efficiency gains to be realized from expansion beyond moderate size are slight, the real costs involved in continued concentration are significant. Some of these are economic costs which can be measured, such as costs of moving and retraining farm families who are forced out of farming, some portion of the welfare and social service costs for families who do not find alternative employment, increasing costs of community services for declining populations, and tax base erosion. Others are social costs which are more difficult to measure, such as the disappearance of small rural communities, concentration of control over community decision making which usually accompanies concentration of community assets, and the loss of opportunity for families to experience the values associated with family farms -- self-reliance, family sharing of work and decision making, control over one's life and work situation, identity with the fruits of one's labor, and kinship with nature.

New Initiatives

While we don't pretend to see a bright light at the end of USDA's tunnel, there is at least a hopeful glimmer. In a statement issued last October, Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland declared that it is now the "policy of the USDA to encourage, preserve, and strengthen the small farm as a continuing component of agriculture in the United States." The Secretary's words gave added weight to a series of regional conferences on the problems of small farmers that the USDA sponsored last summer in cooperation with ACTION and the Community Services Administration.

If that were all, there would be little cause for excitement. On March 12, however, in an address to the National Farmers Union convention in Kansas City, Mr. Bergland once again took up the theme of reform. "I am here to open what I hope will become a full-scale national dialogue on the future of American agriculture," he said. That dialogue is to take place in preparation for the drafting of a new farm bill in 1931, the year the current Food and Agriculture Act expires. After noting the success that past government policies have had in increasing production in this country, the Secretary asked, "Are these policies and programs at the same time creating, or helping to create, something we don't want in American agriculture? Are they in whole or in part responsible for an unending trend toward larger and fewer farms that will increasingly dominate and control production?"

Although Mr. Bergland did not propose any answers to the questions he raised, he did indicate that USDA was serious about preserving an agriculture based on relatively small operations. He stressed that the time to act is now. The alternative is to "let matters take their course, with the probable result that we will wake up some morning to find out that we have forfeited our last chance to save those characteristics of the farm sector we believe are worth preserving. As your Secretary of Agriculture, I want you to know that I, for one, do not want to see an America where a handful of giant operations own, manage and control the entire food production system."

General though it may be, this is strong language when read against the backdrop of a quarter-century of USDA policy that has served very different goals. The Taskforce has warned for years that firm government action would be required if the family farm system is to be saved. We recognize that the Secretary of Agriculture is not all-powerful. He serves as part of an Administration that has not demonstrated great sympathy for the problems of family farmers, and his decisions will inevitably be influenced by his political context. He would be hard put, for example, to champion any program that would result in higher food prices. Moreover, he can do nothing to affect directly such important government policy as taxation. But a shift in USDA priorities, besides yielding immediate gains to family farmers, could lead, in time, to a Congressional overhaul of the laws that fuel consolidation and stimulate absentee ownership in the agricultural sector.

To begin the development of a national farm structure policy, the Secretary has ordered:

- the development of a new definition of a family farm
- an analysis of the impact of price and income support programs
- a review of tax policy and its impact on agriculture
- a report from the Farm Credit Administration and Farmers Home Administration on the impact of various loan programs

In addition, the USDA head announced that a series of consultations and seminars will be conducted this summer and fall aimed at evaluating the effect of federal

policies on the survival of the family farm system. It is the Taskforce's hope that these consultations will be structured in such a way as to provide maximum public participation.

The Family Farm Development Service

How could such a shift in USDA priorities come about? And how could the concern for the family farm system be institutionalized within USDA? HUNGER 17 (March 1979) presents an overview of the Family Farm Development Act, a major piece of legislation that aims to redirect federal policy towards support of small and moderate-sized family farms. One title of that Act proposes the creation of a Family Farm Development Service within USDA. The general mission of this agency would be to provide a focal point around which activity on behalf of the family farm could cluster. Some present USDA programs do provide help to small and moderate-sized farms but the effort is scattered and inconsistent. The creation of a Family Farm Development Service could give the cause of the family farmer greater weight and visibility. As a permanent agency, it could also generate new approaches to farm problems, triggering substantial reform at USDA.

According to the language of the Family Farm Development Act, the Service would have the authority to coordinate all USDA programs concerned with the development and maintenance of small and moderate-sized family farms. This would involve working with such agencies as Extension and the Farmer Cooperative Service to improve communications and eliminate duplication of effort. It would evaluate these same programs and send an annual report to Congress on their effectiveness, making recommendations for change. It would develop a long-range plan, submitted to Congress within three and a half years, to encourage the development of new and improved farming techniques and technology that would enable small and moderate-sized farms to become more energy efficient, more environmentally responsible and more economically stable. Finally, it would set up a board to award grants for research and for demonstration projects, and to oversee the establishment of demonstration and training centers. These research and education efforts would enable USDA to attain the goals outlined in the long-range plan.

Ideally, there should be no need for a Family Farm Development Service. All of USDA should serve small and moderate-sized farms, or at least do nothing to discourage them. But this is not the case. The ultimate justification for such a service lies in its potential to return USDA to its roots, to make it once again the "people's department," as President Lincoln referred to it at its founding. According to Secretary Bergland, the time is ripe for such a venture.

Rural Development: The Broader Context

Closely related to the need for a Family Farm Development Service is the need for greater visibility and coordination in the more general area of rural development. The Taskforce has emphasized the important interrelationships between the structure of agriculture and the viability of rural communities. It is vital that policy planners begin to look at farm problems as part of national rural policy and vice versa.

One legislative proposal, the Rural Development Policy Act of 1979 (HR 3850) introduced by Representatives Richard Nolan (D-MN) and Charles Grassley (R-IA), would provide a statutory mandate for the Working Group on Rural Development. This Working Group was created by executive order after the Rural Development Act of 1972 was passed, but has been relatively inactive since then. The new act would, among other things, require annual and quadrennial reports from the Administration on its rural strategy. In addition, the act would extend the Title V Rural Development and Small Farm Research and Extension Programs of the 1972 Act for two

more years. USDA is currently revising this program and will reportedly seek a major overhaul in its design sometime next year. Meantime, HR 3850 would extend the current program while that process is completed.

On the Senate side, the Rural Development Policy and Coordination Act of 1979 has been introduced by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT). Among other things, this Act would direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a rural development policy management process involving state and local governments and all the executive branch departments and agencies and private sector institutions having policies and programs affecting the quality of life in rural areas. In addition, it would require a national rural policy statement to be sent to Congress every five years, with biennial progress report updates. However, the act would not create a working group or coordinating council within the federal bureaucracy to oversee this process.

Both the House and Senate bills, or proposals similar to them, should receive careful consideration and be reported out as soon as possible.

* * * * ACTION * * * * * ACTION * * * * * ACTION * * * *

Secretary Bergland deserves support in the courageous position he has taken. His message to the National Farmers Union will not endear him to agribusiness, or to large farmers who have an interest in preserving the status quo. He said, in part, "If we want to save the family farm; if we want to preserve the diversity of American agriculture... then we must all begin the serious consideration of a farm policy that would be committed to an agricultural structure in America that is in the... interests of the family farm operator."

We urge you to write to the Secretary, expressing appreciation for his stand and recommending that he take an active interest in promoting the creation of a Family Farm Development Service within USDA, perhaps as part of a stronger rural development program. You might also mention the Family Farm Development Act as an appropriate set of reforms needed to begin the process of preserving and strengthening the family farm system. Copies of your letter should be sent to your Members of Congress, especially if they are on the House or Senate Agriculture Committees, the House Ways and Means or Senate Finance Committee (which deal with tax policy), or the Senate Small Business Committee.

Address your letters to: Secretary Bergland
US Department of Agriculture
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable (member of congress)
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable (member of congress)
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

FOOD POLICY NOTES



INTERRELIGIOUS TASKFORCE ON U.S. FOOD POLICY

GEORGE A. CHAUNCEY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.
CHAIRMAN

NOTE 79-9

FOOD SECURITY ACT OF 1979

May 1, 1979

The Food Security Act of 1979 was introduced in the House on April 10. Representatives Benjamin Gilman (R-NY) and Matthew McHugh (D-NY) introduced identical bills (HR3611 and HR3612, respectively).¹ The bills have been referred to the House Foreign Affairs and Agriculture Committees which are expected to hold joint hearings in the coming months.

The Food Security Act of 1979 would create a food aid reserve of 4 million metric tons (mmt) of wheat to backstop the US PL480 (Food for Peace) program. The legislation seeks to deal with the problem that PL480 stockpiles have decreased in years in which commodities have been in short supply, i.e., at precisely those times when food aid has been most needed. For example, PL480 shipments dropped from 9.9 mmt in Fiscal Year 1972 to 3.3 mmt in Fiscal Year 1974, a year of world wide crop shortfall. Improved continuity of supply is essential in order for US food aid to accomplish recognized humanitarian and development objectives.

The Gilman and McHugh bills reintroduced an idea which received congressional consideration in 1977 and 1978. In those years an "International Emergency Wheat Reserve" of 6 mmt was proposed. However, for a variety of reasons the proposal was never enacted. The title of this year's legislation should be helpful in avoiding some of the confusion which accompanied earlier legislative efforts. Some members of Congress had assumed that the International Emergency Wheat Reserve was indeed an international reserve. In reality, its purpose, as this year's legislation clarifies, is exclusively to backstop the Food for Peace program.

The Administration supported the proposal in 1977 and 1978 and has reiterated its support for a creation of such a food aid reserve in 1979. It is understood to be drafting legislation substantially along the lines of the Gilman and McHugh bills which it may introduce shortly.

In the past the proposal has had a wide range of co-sponsorship and is expected to attract considerable support again this year. Both legislative and executive approaches would place the reserves in government rather than in farmer hands. It would also establish a reserve of physical commodities rather than a financial fund, to assure that the food itself is available and accessible in time of need.

The Taskforce has supported a food aid reserve such as the one proposed for several years, and supports the Food Security Act of 1979.

For further information call the Taskforce toll-free at 800/424-7292 (Washington, DC area residents please call 543-2800).

¹For further reference, see Congressional Record of April 10, 1979 at E1714 and H2196.

FOOD POLICY NOTES



INTERRELIGIOUS TASKFORCE ON U.S. FOOD POLICY

GEORGE A. CHAUNCEY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.
CHAIRMAN

NOTE 79-10 COMMON FUND NEGOTIATIONS MAKE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS May 2, 1979

On March 20 negotiators in Geneva reported that they had reached agreement on the basic elements of a Common Fund to help stabilize world commodity prices. For those of us who have been following the hesitant progress of the negotiations since 1974 this was very good news. Of all the developing country proposals for a New International Economic Order (NIEO), the Common Fund was the only one on which negotiations were actually in progress. (For background material on the NIEO and trade issues see our previous HUNGERS: #4, April 1976 and #14, February 1978).

The Common Fund would operate like a bank, accepting deposits from and making loans to International Commodity Agreements (ICAs). Each ICA would be composed of the major producing and consuming countries of a commodity--such as sugar, cocoa, or copper--who had agreed to take actions aimed at reducing wide fluctuations of the market price of the commodity. Chief among these actions would be buying the commodity to keep the price up when excess supply drove the price down, and selling the stockpile thus created to keep the price down when a shortage raised the price. Because some ICAs would probably be selling their commodity and making deposits to the Common Fund while others were taking loans to buy their commodity, the amount of money required for stockpiling would be less than if each ICA operated totally by itself.

Recent developments

An examination of what has happened shows that although progress has indeed been made, more work is necessary before a Common Fund can begin to operate. Here is an overview of recent developments:

In early fall, 1978; The developing countries reduced the amount of direct Government contributions they wanted from \$1 billion to \$300 million. The industrialized countries, especially the US, agreed in principle to the existence of a "second window" in the fund (to which they had been opposed in the past) which would make funds available to the developing countries for increasing commodity production and doing more of the processing of those commodities before export.

In late fall, 1978, The Carter Administration agreed that the US would make direct contributions to the Fund. This appeared to be a major concession because their previous position had been that the Fund should consist of deposits received from individual ICAs, not individual nations. However, the US did not agree to the developing country plans to use the Fund directly to finance buffer stocks. The other countries accepted the US proposal that the direct contributions to the Fund are to be used as a reserve, available to the ICAs only in an emergency.

In March, 1979, Negotiators agreed on the levels of direct contributions. Each government that joins the Common Fund will pay an entrance fee of \$1 million (up from the developing countries' proposal in late 1977 of \$200,000). Assuming 150 governments join, \$150 million would be available. Of this, up to \$30 million would go into the 'first window' of the Fund. To this would be added \$320 million of direct contributions based on individual country's ability to pay. This means that the developing countries will be responsible for 10%, the industrialized countries for 68%, the non-market economies for 17%, and China for 5% of the total.

The US share would be about \$64 million. To this total of \$400 million for the "first window" would be added the deposits of the various ICAs and borrowings from international capital markets.

The \$350 million "second window" will be financed with the first \$70 million of entrance fees and up to \$280 million in voluntary contributions. Although the US has withdrawn its objections to the existence of the "second window," Secretary of State Vance has said we will not contribute to it because it will only duplicate the aid function already provided by the World Bank and other international financial institutions. Other countries are expected to make their pledges to the "second window" during the UNCTAD V consultation in Manila this May.

It is difficult to estimate the size of the Common Fund resulting from these negotiations because it will depend on how many ICAs are formed and how much the Fund can borrow. Studies by UNCTAD indicate that with ten or more ICAs the Fund might reach the \$6 billion goal set by the developing countries in 1976. Based on the existence now of only four ICAs and current prospects for new ICAs, other sources in Geneva estimate a Fund of about \$3 billion.

Next steps

The main issue still to be resolved before the broad outlines of the agreement are complete is voting power. The US is insisting on equal shares for the rich and poor country blocs (45% for each, with 10% for the non-market economy countries) even though the other developed countries have agreed to the developing countries' proposal of 47% for the poor countries and 42% for the rich countries. Whichever way this is resolved, the developing countries have already achieved an important goal: unlike other international financial institutions, the voting power in the Common Fund will not be proportionate to the size of financial contribution but based on the principle of equality of nations.

The next step will be to work out the operational details of what is now a very general statement of the size and nature of the Common Fund. What possible complications remain are still unknown. An Interim Committee of the participating nations will continue working on these details in July, hoping to complete their work by the end of 1979. Another full-scale negotiating session will be necessary when a detailed text is ready. If that is successful, the treaty will need to be ratified by the participating governments. In the US, that means action by the Senate. Both the House and Senate would be involved in appropriations for US contributions to the Fund. Some observers are suggesting that all necessary steps can be completed in 1980, and the Common Fund will begin actual operations by the end of 1980. We will keep you informed of developments.

OUR STAKE IN THE URBAN CONDITION

Pertinent Papers



AMERICA'S AGED

SPECIAL VICTIMS OF URBAN NEGLECT

by Robert Wolf, Director

Legal Advocacy Program for the Aged

May 1979

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

165 East 56 Street, New York, N.Y. 10022

INTRODUCTION

By the year 2035, it is estimated, almost one fourth of the U.S. population--some 71 million people out of a total 304 million--will be 60 or more.* The percentage of men and women past 65 years of age more than doubled (from 4.1 percent to 10.5) between 1900 and 1974, and the overall numbers increased seven-fold (from 3 million to 22 million).¹ There was a ten-fold increase in Americans aged 75 or over during this period, and a 17-fold increase in those aged 85 or more.²

While this astounding growth did not "create" an "aging problem," it did sharply exacerbate the problems that the elderly have always faced in our society--particularly inadequacies in employment opportunities, spendable income, housing and health services. To date, attempts to deal with these problems have fallen far short of the needs; especially the needs of the aged urban poor.

The voices of the aged are not yet strident, but their demands have begun to penetrate our social consciousness, and to confront this country with critical choices in social policy.

The following pages examine some of the major problems of the aged, and what society is doing about them.

**Note: The term "aged" or similar references in these pages all refer to individuals 65 or over unless otherwise indicated.*

HOUSING

Housing, its cost and availability, is an overwhelming problem for the aged. The Older Americans Act of 1965 declared that the aged are entitled to suitable housing at a cost they can afford, independently selected, and designed and located with reference to their special needs. The 1971 White House Conference on Aging declared adequate housing "essential to the happiness, health, and welfare of the aging citizen, and hence to the welfare of the nation as a whole." Yet, the number of housing units available to old people at a reasonable cost remains scant. It costs over \$8,000 for a couple to live in an average retirement community, however, the median income of an aged couple is only \$5,500 a year.³

~~Housing costs consume the greater part of the limited income of retired Americans, averaging 33 percent of an average couple's budget.⁴ (Those living on \$4,000 a year or less are likely to spend 40 percent or more on housing costs.)⁵ Annual Housing Survey figures show that old people pay this "excessive" percentage of income twice as often as younger Americans and, in many instances, are also burdened with the greater maintenance costs involved in deteriorating housing.⁶ According to 1972 census estimates as many as 6 million old people were still living in substandard homes and apartments; a 1973 International Housing and Urban Development symposium estimated that 400,000 additional units were needed to house the less affluent aged; and the Department of Housing and Urban Development has estimated that there are 40 old people in need of assisted housing for every one now living in such residences. Even elderly home owners, most of whom have paid off their mortgages, face declining incomes and sharply rising maintenance and property tax costs as the years go by. (Property taxes rose nationally by almost 50 percent between 1970 and 1975, and every state has had to enact some form of modest tax relief for older homeowners.)~~

Only a small minority of the aged live in housing that includes special safety features and amenities for older people, adequate access to health care, shopping, transportation and recreation, and architectural design which encourages residents to move out of isolation and spend time together.

The Federal Government does have a number of programs that provide loans and grants to local housing authorities and direct loans to private non-profit sponsors of affordable housing for the aged. The major policy thrust, however, has been the Section 8 rent subsidy program, designed to stimulate the housing industry by underwriting part of the rent for those residents unable to pay the full cost.

However, the monies allotted for such programs are not enough to meet the needs of the poor and the aged; the bureaucratic detail

discourages many qualified landlords and tenants from applying; and there is insufficient coordination between one program and another. Furthermore, there is no Federal funding for vitally needed supportive social services for the aged.

Residential Segregation

American cities have seen important changes in the demographics of their residential populations. Large numbers of the middle and upper classes have moved out, as have many businesses, while the proportion of poor people has risen. This has left many cities with a shrinking tax base at the same time that the demand for social services has increased sharply.

Census data indicate that a disproportionate number of the poor and the aged live in the central city, remaining behind when the young and the more affluent reach out to the suburbs. Though this concentration offers some advantage in the delivery of services by government and private agencies, it tends to segregate old people in the most deteriorated parts of our cities, where the crime rate is high, fires are frequent and property is more often abandoned by landlords than repaired.

The return of many young adults to the central cities in the past few years offers some hope that the pattern of segregation may be reversed. Many of these younger people are upgrading deteriorating areas and their higher earnings bring more tax revenue to the city. If this trend continues, and other pro-urban policies are encouraged, the deterioration of the cities may be reversed. But until this happens, the central cities will remain in deep economic difficulties--and so will the poor, the racial minorities and the aged who live in them.

HEALTH

The three basic problems in the delivery of health care to the aged are cost, access and quality.

From 1950 to 1974, overall national health expenditures increased from 12 billion to 104.2 billion.⁷ Between 1966 and 1975 public and private dollars spent on health care for persons over 65 increased from \$445 to \$1,360 per person per year.⁸ It is estimated that about 75 percent of all old people suffer some form of chronic illness, particularly arthritis, rheumatism, diabetes or cardiovascular problems.⁹ The elderly see doctors more often and are hospitalized more frequently, and for longer periods.¹⁰ America has not been able to answer the growing demand for long-term care. Most quality nursing homes have long waiting lists and alternatives to institutionalization are not adequately funded. (At the same time it should be pointed out that only 5 percent of the elderly are institutionalized and only 5.2 percent are homebound.)¹¹

The aged find access to quality health care especially difficult because of their isolation, their lack of mobility, their

*Continued
1972
Ages
Summary*

limited financial resources, and the fact that health services are so often fragmented. In many inner city areas health facilities, doctors and pharmacists are becoming scarcer. Emergency rooms and clinics have taken on the role of primary care providers.

Environmental stress and lower socio-economic status add to the health problems of the aged poor in the cities. Good health and high income have a high degree of correlation. A study of inner-city aged by the New York City Office for the Aging revealed that 61 percent of those in the highest income group, but only 24 percent of the lowest income group, reported that their health was good.¹² Old people who are also members of minority groups have substantially lower incomes than non-minority aged; in 1974 elderly blacks had incomes approximately two-thirds that of whites. Data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports (1974), cited in Harris, p.34. ¹³.

The Medicare program was enacted in 1965 as a Federal health insurance program for the elderly, but ever-increasing premium costs and deductibles have sharply limited its promise as a health-care umbrella for older Americans. Medicare pays only about 40 percent of the elderly's total health care costs. It does not cover preventive care, prescription drugs, dental services, eyeglasses, chronic, long term, or extended home care. The following chart shows the average costs borne by individual Medicare recipients in 1970, over and above their Medicare reimbursements, for various health services.

<u>TYPE OF EXPENSES</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Hospital care	\$372.10
Physicians' services	136.41
Dentists' services	17.28
Other professional services	15.12
Drugs	84.41
Eyeglasses and prosthesis	19.39
Nursing home care	128.62
Other health services	17.23
TOTAL	\$790.63

Source: The Health Crisis of Older New Yorkers. The New York City Office for the Aging. 1972. p. 27.

Medicaid is a joint program of the Federal Government and the states. Unlike Medicare, it covers medical services for the very poor of all ages, with reimbursements varying from state to state. Old people with incomes below the poverty line may be covered by Medicaid as well as Medicare, but those whose incomes exceed the limit set by the state are not eligible for Medicaid assistance.

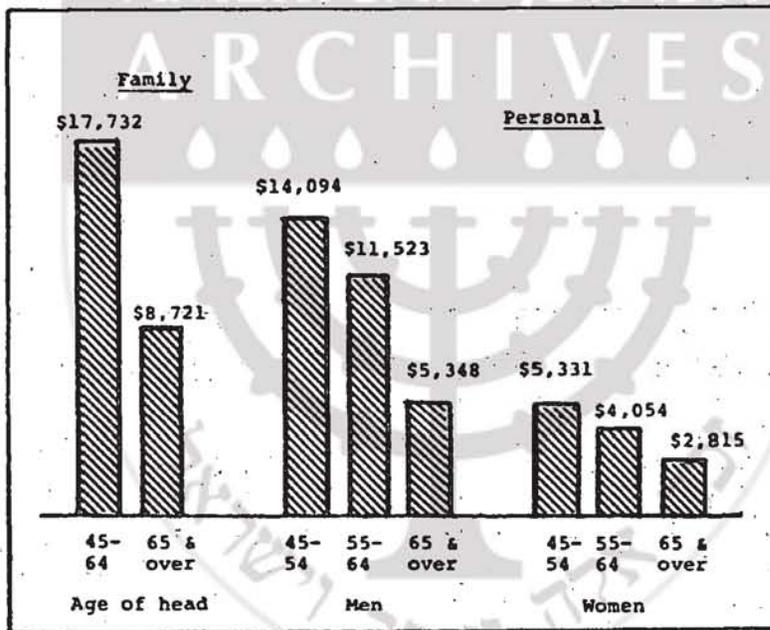
A national health insurance program may solve some of these problems, but there is little likelihood that such a program will be enacted in the near future.

INCOME

In the cities, the aged are the largest group living on fixed incomes. They also spend a higher proportion of their incomes on such basics as food, housing and medical care, and a smaller proportion for other consumer goods, transportation and recreation than do younger city dwellers. Inner-city residents rarely own their own homes, and they are more likely to receive public assistance and contributions from family, friends and social agencies.

The National Council on the Aging reports that the income level of the aged is approximately one-half that of the younger population.¹⁴ (In 1975, the median income for families with heads of household aged 65 and over was \$7,298 per year, compared to \$15,151 for younger families.) The following chart compares the incomes of families and individuals aged 45-64, and 65 and over.

MEDIAN INCOME, 1976



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. In The Graying of America. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. June 1978. p.10.

In 1975, 15 percent of those aged 65 and over lived below the Federally established poverty line (\$2,791 for individuals; \$3,232 for couples); 25 percent were classified as "near poor" (\$3,215 for individuals; \$4,040 for couples). The proportion of black aged below the poverty line is two and one half times the proportion of white aged, 15.

Older people living alone have more restricted incomes than aged couples. Since twice as many old women as men live alone, and women as a group earn less and accumulate less in pension and social security benefits, older women as a group have more financial problems. (The 1970 Census reported a median income of \$2,517 for single men over 65; \$1,916 for women.)

The following chart represents the various sources of income for the aged in 1971, in New York City and in the nation as a whole.

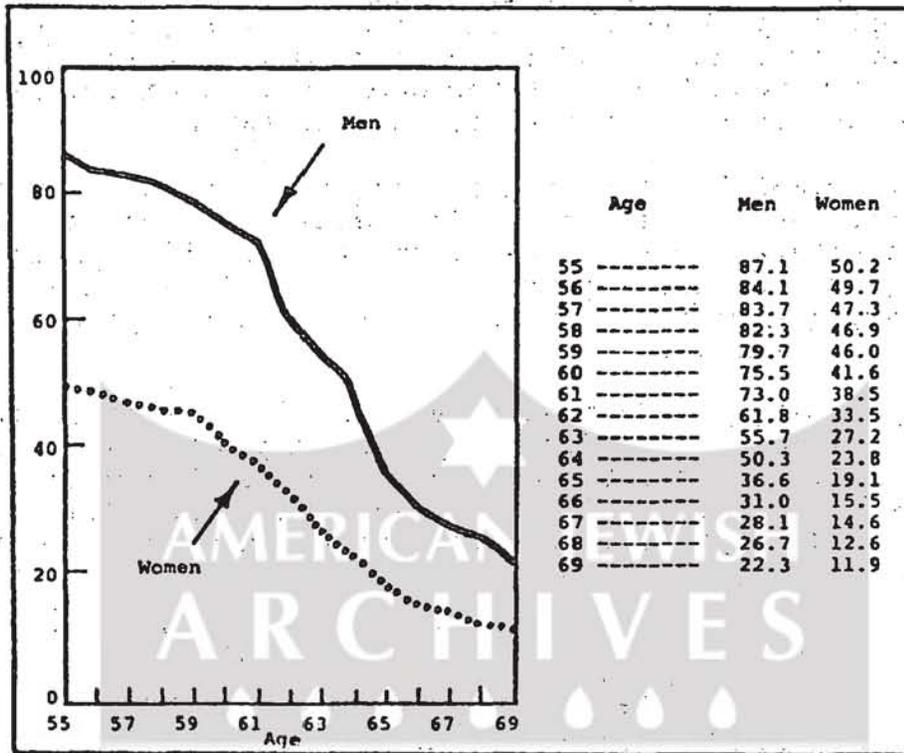
<u>Source of Income</u>	<u>Percent of Aged Receiving Benefits</u>	
	<u>New York City</u>	<u>Nationwide</u>
Social Security	85	86
Assets	19	50
Earnings	15	27
Pensions	30	21
Public Assistance	19	12
Contributions	11	3

Source: Recent Developments in the Economics of the Aging. New York City Office for the Aging. 1975. p.7.

Few Americans continue to work past 65; in 1975 only 21.7 percent of men and 8.3 percent of women over 65 held paying jobs. (See chart on p.7.) It is possible, however, that these statistics may change substantially when the new Federal law barring mandatory retirement before age 70 takes effect on January 1, 1979.

Social Security is a major source of income for older Americans. (By 1980, 90 percent of older Americans will have earned Social Security benefits.) Social Security payments are tied to the Consumer Price Index; in theory, therefore, benefits keep pace with the cost of living. The purchasing patterns of the aged, however, differ substantially from those of the total urban population, and the inflation rate for their expenditures, particularly shelter and medical care, is considerably higher than the overall increase in the cost of living for the nation as a whole.^{16.}

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES, 1976



Source: *The Graying of America*. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. June 1978. p.7.

In 1972 a guaranteed minimum income assistance program was adopted as an amendment to the Social Security Act. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides a minimum monthly grant and supplements other income, including Social Security, up to that amount; or provides the full amount to those with no income at all. In 1977 the basic Federal grant for old people living independently was \$177.80 for individuals and \$266.70 for couples. However, receipt of assistance from family members or friends may lower this monthly amount.

Twenty-three states supplement the Federal SSI grants. In 1977, these state supplements ranged from \$2.20 (New Hampshire) to \$118.73 (Massachusetts) per month for individuals and from \$10.00 (Oregon) to \$290.30 (California) for couples. The median state supplement was \$33.20 for individuals and \$59.32 for couples.

Studies indicate that only 50 percent of urban aged eligible for assistance avail themselves of such aid.⁴⁷ Many are reluctant to accept "charity," and public and private agencies are often

unable to reach those in greatest need of help. Even older people who attend senior centers are not always aware of the full spectrum of services available to them. In addition, SSI benefits are limited to those whose assets do not exceed a maximum of \$1,500 for individuals and \$2,250 for couples. Many old people hesitate to spend their savings down to this amount, which they look on as money set aside for funeral expenses.

Even with SSI benefits and additional state supplements, many aged experience severe financial hardship. The Federal Government estimated that it cost from \$418 to \$628 a month for an elderly couple to live in the New York-New Jersey area. In the same year, the maximum payments in Federal SSI plus New York State supplement was \$327.74.

In a 1975 study conducted by the Community Council of Greater New York, 81 percent of SSI recipients reported that they were managing with difficulty, 66 percent responded that they had given up purchases of clothing, 55 percent said that they did not have enough food, and 47 percent said that they could not purchase personal items.^{18.}

CONCLUSION

As American society grows older, the problems of the aged will become more and more central to the nation as a whole. Yet relatively little is being done now, to gather information and to plan intelligently, to meet the needs of this ever-growing proportion of our citizenry.

The Older American Act speaks of health, honor, dignity, freedom, and independence for the aging. It is a goal that all people share. Every man and woman desires security and fulfillment when they are aged. But only an active partnership of government, the local community, our voluntary institutions, and the aged themselves can make this goal a reality.

NOTES

1. Current Population Report (Special Studies, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Series P-23 #7, 1974), p.3.
2. Report of the Office of Human Development, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, cited in The New York Times (April 12, 1978).
3. Robert M. Butler, Why Survive: Being Old in America (Harper & Row, 1975), p.117.
4. Department of Labor Consumer Expenditure Survey (1973), cited in Charles S. Harris, Fact Book on Aging (National Council on Aging, 1978), p.190.
5. Raymond J. Struyk, "The Housing Expense Burden of Households Headed by the Elderly," The Gerontologist (October 1977), p.447.
6. Data from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Annual Housing Survey (1973), cited in Harris, p.179.
7. Data from Social Security Bulletin (June 1976), p.28, and Part I: Developments in Aging 1976, (U.S. Senate: A Report of the Special Committee on Aging, 1976), p.25. Cited in Harris, p.134.
8. Trends Affecting the U.S. Health Care System (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1975). p.153.
9. Data from the U.S. Public Health Service National Health Survey (1964), cited in Marjorie Cantor and Mary Mayer, The Health Crisis of Older New Yorkers (New York City Office for the Aging, 1972), p.6.
10. Health Care Systems, pp. 10-12.
11. Harris, pp. 128, 117 (chart).
12. "Health of the Inner-City Aged." Findings based on The Elderly in the Inner City (New York City Office for the Aging, 1974). p. 15, table 2.
13. Data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports (1974), cited in Harris, p.34.
14. Harris, p.37.

15. Ibid, p. 44.
16. Recent Developments in the Economics of Aging (New York City Office for the Aging, June 1975), p. 36.
17. Ibid, p. 40.
18. SSI: One Year Later (Community Council of Greater New York, March 1975).

Robert Wolf is director of the American Jewish Committee's Legal Advocacy Program for the Aged, an activity of its New York Chapter. This program, established in 1976 under a grant from the Brookdale Foundation, combats age-related discrimination and helps secure and extend the legal rights and entitlements of older adults. A Committee on Aging, chaired by Samuel Sadin and Alice Rush Levy, act as Project Advisors on legislation and programs affecting the elderly.

This is the fourth in a series of occasional Pertinent Papers published by the Domestic Affairs Department of The American Jewish Committee, Seymour Samet, Director. Sholom D. Comay is Chairperson of AJC's Domestic Affairs Commission.

800-325-3535
May 9, 1979

MEMORANDUM

TO: Participants, Symposium on White House Conferences As Agents
For Social Change

FROM: Wilma T. Donahue, Director
International Center for Social Gerontology

I am pleased that you are able to participate in our Symposium in preparation for the 1981 White House Conference on Aging. We shall soon send you specific information about the program and committee plans along with background papers. In the meantime, in order to assist with your planning, the following paragraphs provide information on some of the details about the program, the conference site, expenses, and transportation.

Schedule

Registration begins at 5 P.M. on Tuesday, May 29, followed at 6 P.M. by a reception, dinner, and introductory address. The final session will be a breakfast meeting on Friday, June 1, with adjournment by 11 A.M.

Conference Site and Accommodations

703-620-9000

The Symposium will be accommodated at the Sheraton International Conference Center, Reston, Virginia -- located about 8 minutes (6 miles) from Dulles International Airport.

Accommodations will be under the American Plan. All room reservations will be arranged by the Symposium for single occupancy unless you indicate otherwise. At the time of registration, meal cards will be issued to all participants for use in the hotel dining room or in an adjoining Chinese restaurant.

The Symposium cannot pay for telephone calls, laundry, dry cleaning, alcoholic drinks, or any other services ordered on an individual basis. To cover these expenditures, the hotel will establish a personal account for those persons who request it.

URGENT

Whether or not you will require sleeping accommodations, will you please fill out as soon as possible the enclosed Reservation Form indicating the date and time you plan to arrive and to leave, and return it to the International Center for Social Gerontology. We are required to furnish the conference center a list of all participants requiring sleeping accommodations

by May 15. Thus, I would be grateful if you would return the reservation form to me as soon as possible. If your plans change thereafter, please advise me immediately.

Transportation

The Symposium will pay economy class airfare, or its equivalent if you drive, and the cost of ground transportation to and from the airport in your home city and the Washington airport and the Reston Conference site.

Receipt for the airfare is required for our accounting, but not for ground transportation. The receipt should be turned in with the travel voucher we will provide you at the symposium.

Access to the Sheraton Conference Center

1. By Public Transport (Bus schedule enclosed)

... Dulles Airport - A courtesy limousine is furnished by the hotel on the hour and half hour. To request, dial 7105 or 7106 on the Sheraton courtesy telephone (on lower level near baggage pickup)

... National Airport - There is direct public bus service between National Airport and Dulles Airport where the courtesy limousine is available to the conference site. Travel time between National and Dulles is approximately 40 minutes; cost is \$4.75.

... Downtown Washington - Bus service is available to Dulles Airport from the Capitol Hilton at 16th and K Streets, N.W. every hour or half hour from 6 A.M. on. Travel time between downtown Washington and Dulles Airport is approximately 45 minutes; cost is \$4.75.

2. By Car

... By car from North on Capital Beltway (Route 495): Take exit 11S, to Route 123 to Route 7W, left on Route 606 (Baron Cameron Avenue), pass the Reston Information Center, Lake Anne Village Area, left on Route 602, cross over the Dulles Airport Access Road, follow signs to Sheraton Inn on left.

... By car from South on Capital Beltway (Route 495): Take Exit 10W to Route 7W, left on Route 606 (Baron Cameron Avenue, pass the Reston Information Center, Lake Anne Village Area, left on Route 602, cross over the Dulles Airport Access Road, follow signs to Sheraton Inn on left.

AIRPORT LIMOUSINE SERVICE

Direct Service To/From National Airport
From Sheraton - Reston, Va., Via Greyhound

SUNDAY - FRIDAY
TO NATIONAL

LEAVES: 8:00 A.M.
4:15 P.M.

FROM NATIONAL

LEAVES: 7:00 P.M.
9:00 P.M.

DAILY

DULLES INTERNATIONAL
—TO—
WASHINGTON NATIONAL

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—TO—
DULLES INTERNATIONAL

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DEPARTURES

CAPITOL HILTON
—TO—
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FOR RESERVATION

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—TO—
CAPITOL HILTON
Via WASHINGTON HILTON

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† Except Sat., Sun., & Hol.
*No Rosslyn Stop Ramp Closed.

VIRGINIA & MARYLAND SUBURBAN SERVICE - Economy Service available 20 minutes after request from Dulles. From pick-up points to Dulles hourly between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. on reservation. Sedan Service available: see Dispatcher or call reservations.

(THIS SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

A SYMPOSIUM ON
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCES AS AGENTS
FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



*International Center for Social Gerontology, Inc.
Symposium: White House Conferences As Agents For Social Change
May 29 - June 1, 1979*

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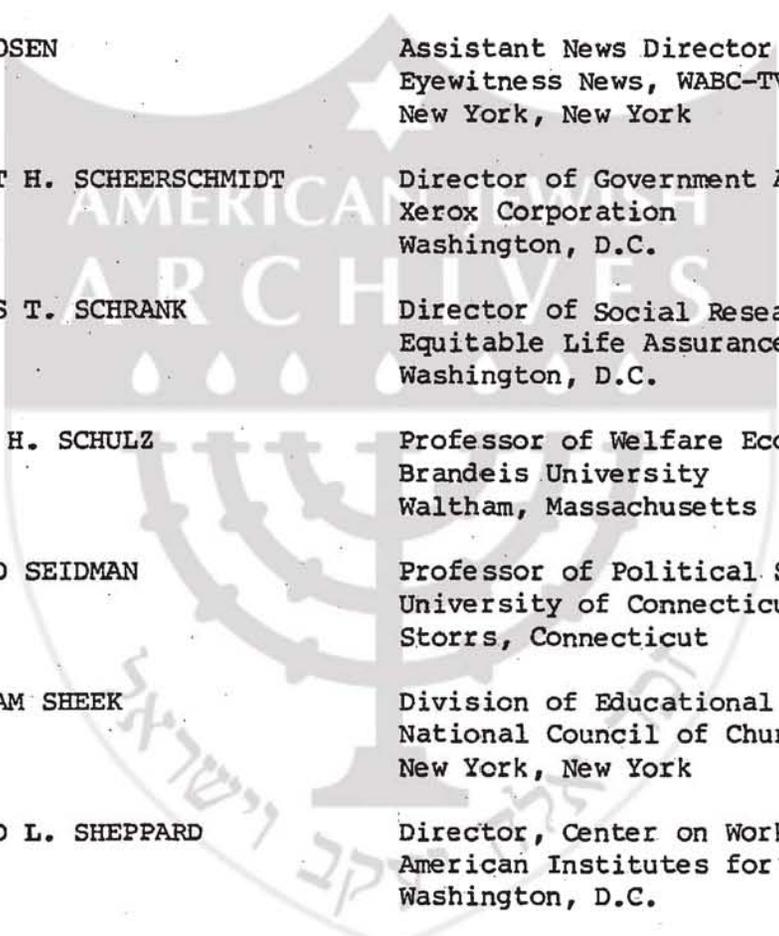
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A SYMPOSIUM ON
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCES AS AGENTS
FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



International Center for Social Gerontology, Inc.
Symposium: White House Conferences As Agents For Social Change
May 29 - June 1, 1979

PROGRAM

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY, INC.
SYMPOSIUM ON

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCES AS AGENTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

May 29 - June 1, 1979
Sheraton International Conference Center
Reston, Virginia

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES
TUESDAY, MAY 29

P.M. 5:00	Registration begins	Hotel Lobby
6:30	Reception	Room B
7:30	SYMPOSIUM DINNER	Room C
	INTRODUCTION TO THE SYMPOSIUM	
	THE FUTURE OF AGING IN THE UNITED STATES	The Honorable Claude D. Pepper
	WORK PLAN FOR THE SYMPOSIUM	Wilma T. Donahue
9:30	Adjournment	

PROGRAM
WEDNESDAY, MAY 30

A.M.
8:45

SESSION I - A FUTURES ORIENTATION
Chairman and Interlocutor: Herbert Gerjuoy

Room I

AMERICAN SOCIETY UNDER THE NEW REFORMATION:
1979 AND BEYOND

Philip Hauser

10:00 Break

10:15 VIEWPOINTS

Kenneth E. Boulding Bernice L. Neugarten
Robert N. Butler, M.D.

Audience Discussion

12:15 Adjournment

P.M.
12:30

COMMITTEE LUNCHEONS

Restaurant
Annex

ORGANIZING AND ESTABLISHING AGENDA

2:15 Adjournment of Committee Meetings

2:30 SESSION II - FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Chairman and Interlocutor: The Honorable Martha E. Keys

Room I

CURRENT AND PROJECTED OUTLAYS FOR THE OLDER POPULATION
Robert L. Clark

Response - June O'Neill and Audience

4:00 Break

4:15 SESSION III - ROLE OF A WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

Chairman: The Honorable Arthur S. Flemming

Room I

A WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE AS AN AGENT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE
Clark Tibbitts

Chairman Comments and Audience Response

5:15 Adjournment

7:30 SIMULTANEOUS COMMITTEE MEETINGS

B-2
Am 9

PROGRAM
THURSDAY, MAY 31

A.M.
8:45

SESSION IV - INSTITUTIONAL ROLES
Chairman: Louis Harris

Room I

INFORMING THE AMERICAN PUBLIC ABOUT LONG LIFE
Merrell M. Clark

Audience Response and Discussion

9:45 Break

10:00 SIMULTANEOUS COMMITTEE MEETINGS

P.M.
12:00

SYMPOSIUM LUNCHEON (To Be Announced)

Presiding: Robert C. Benedict

Cyril F. Brickfield Marjorie A. Collins Edward Wallace

Audience Response

2:00 Adjournment of Luncheon

2:15 SIMULTANEOUS COMMITTEE MEETINGS

5:15 Adjournment of Committee Meetings

7:45 SESSION V - INTERNATIONAL NIGHT

Room I

INTERNATIONAL ASPECT OF A 1981 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING
Chairman: William E. Oriol

THE PROJECTED 1982 WORLD ASSEMBLY

Marion Creekmore

CURRENT CONCERNS ABOUT AGING AMONG PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

William M. Kerrigan

THE LIMITS AND POSSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL POLICIES
IN THE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Alfred J. Kahn

HOW AGING IS VIEWED IN DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING NATIONS
AND HOW A WORLD ASSEMBLY ON AGING MAY BE USEFUL TO THEM

Simon Bergman

Question and Discussion Period

9:30 Adjournment

PROGRAM
FRIDAY, JUNE 1

A.M.
8:30

SESSION VI - WHAT WE HAVE DONE HERE: A HEARING

Room I

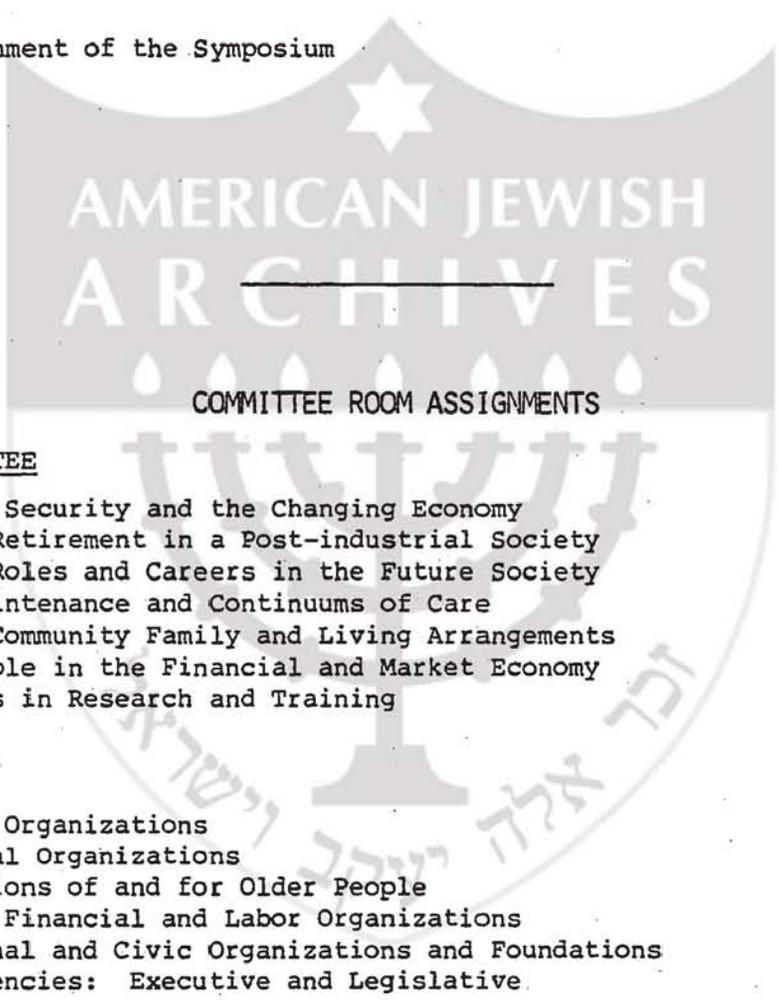
Interrogators

Robert N. Butler, M.D.
Robert C. Benedict
Simon Bergman
Edith Green (Chairman)

Respondents

Representatives of
A & B Committees

11:00 Adjournment of the Symposium



AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

COMMITTEE ROOM ASSIGNMENTS

<u>COMMITTEE</u>	<u>ROOM</u>
A-1 Financial Security and the Changing Economy	1
A-2 Work and Retirement in a Post-industrial Society	2
A-3 Evolving Roles and Careers in the Future Society	3
A-4 Health Maintenance and Continuums of Care	4
A-5 Changing Community Family and Living Arrangements	8
A-6 Older People in the Financial and Market Economy	9
A-7 Directions in Research and Training	10
B-1 Media	10
B-2 Religious Organizations	9
B-3 Educational Organizations	8
B-4 Organizations of and for Older People	4
B-5 Business, Financial and Labor Organizations	3
B-6 Professional and Civic Organizations and Foundations	2
B-7 Public Agencies: Executive and Legislative	1

WHO'S WHO ON THE PROGRAM

THE HONORABLE ROBERT C. BENEDICT
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Administration on Aging
Department of Health,
Education, and Welfare

WILMA T. DONAHUE, Ph.D.
Director
International Center
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SPEECH DELIVERED AT AGING WITH TELEVISION CONFERENCE

REGENCY HYATT HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D.C., SEPTEMBER 17, 1979

Marc Lincoln Marks
Member of Congress

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, GOOD AFTERNOON.

I AM PLEASED TO BE HERE TODAY TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT
A TOPIC WITH WHICH I AM BECOMING INCREASINGLY FAMILIAR --
AGING.

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU TODAY SOME OF THE
INSIGHTS I HAVE GAINED AS A MEMBER OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE
ON AGING, WHICH IN 1977 AND 1978 HELD HEARINGS ON THE SUBJECT
OF AGE STEREOTYPING AND TELEVISION, INCLUDING ADVERTISING.

I WOULD THEN LIKE TO ADDRESS -- BASED ON MY EXPERIENCE
AS A MEMBER OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS -- A CRITICAL
QUESTION IN COMMUNICATIONS POLICY: WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH ALL
OF YOUR FINE RESEARCH TO BRING IT TO BEAR ON THE PROBLEM OF
THE CONTENT OF TELEVISION PROGRAMS AND ADVERTISING.

I FEEL VERY STRONGLY THAT ACADEMICIANS AND POLICY-
MAKERS SHOULD GET TOGETHER. YOU WHO HAVE THE TIME AND
RESOURCES TO INVESTIGATE SOCIAL PHENOMENA SHOULD MAKE SURE
THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY ARE AWARE OF YOUR FINDINGS
AND YOUR INSIGHTS. YOU HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE, NOT ONLY
IN STUDYING SOCIETY, BUT IN HELPING TO IMPROVE AND CHANGE
SOCIETY.

YOUR ASSISTANCE IS PARTICULARLY VALUABLE WITH REGARD
TO THE MASS MEDIA, ESPECIALLY TELEVISION. NINETY-EIGHT PERCENT
OF THE HOMES IN THE UNITED STATES HAVE AT LEAST ONE TV SET
AND PEOPLE IN THOSE HOMES WATCH AN AVERAGE OF SIX HOURS OF
TELEVISION EVERY DAY.

AND TELEVISION, AS WE KNOW -- AND WHICH HAS BEEN
EXPRESSED THIS MORNING -- IS NOT MERELY ENTERTAINMENT. IT
SHAPES OUR PERCEPTIONS OF REALITY. TELEVISION DEFINES FOR
US WHO AND WHAT IS GOOD AND BAD.

VALUES CONVEYED IN THE FORM OF FICTION ARE PARTICULARLY
IMPORTANT TO EXAMINE SINCE THIS FORMAT DISARMS VIEWERS'
ALERTNESS TO VALUE BIASES AND STEREOTYPES. AS ONE CULTURE

CRITIC, LESLIE HEDLEY, HAS OBSERVED, "IN ART IT IS EASY TO TELL LIES BECAUSE ART IS A THEATER OF IMAGINATION AND LIES APPEAR HARMLESS, EVEN AMUSING, AND SOMETIMES NOBLE."

IT IS VERY UNFORTUNATE THAT MANY VIEWERS ASSUME WITHOUT QUESTION THAT THE SIMPLIFIED STATEMENTS AND CLICHÉS TRANSMITTED BY POPULAR CULTURE ARE VALID. IT IS NOT ONLY KIDS WHO CONFUSE TELEVISION AND REALITY. I WAS AMAZED BY THE FACT THAT 250,000 LETTERS, MOST CONTAINING REQUESTS FOR MEDICAL ADVICE, WERE SENT TO MARCUS WELBY, M.D.

CLEARLY, THOSE IN CHARGE OF THIS MEDIUM BEAR A TREMENDOUS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. NOWHERE IS THIS MORE CLEAR THAN IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF TELEVISION TO THE ELDERLY.

WITNESSES TESTIFYING BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING STRESSED THREE WAYS IN WHICH TELEVISION CAN BE USEFUL TO THE 50-PLUS AGE GROUP.

ONE ---TELEVISION CAN PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGING PROCESS. IT CAN PROVIDE US WITH VARIOUS ROLE MODELS DEMONSTRATING DIFFERENT WAYS TO DEAL SUCCESSFULLY WITH GROWING OLDER. WE NEED SOME REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE VISIONS

OF OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR STYLE OF LIFE. SOMETHING BETWEEN THE CANTANKEROUS, CONSTIPATED, SICKLY, STERILE, STUPID, FORGETFUL IMAGE AND THE ALL TOO-PERFECT, EVER-HELPFUL, ALL-KNOWING, GRACIOUS AND KINDLY IMAGE.

TWO -- TELEVISION CAN BRING THE WORLD TO THOSE ELDERLY UNABLE TO GET OUT INTO THE WORLD. THUS, THE ELDERLY PERSON DOES NOT FEEL LEFT OUT OR CUT OFF. THEY CAN SHARE, VIA TELEVISION, SPORTS EVENTS, DRAMA, DANCE, POLITICAL EVENTS, THAT OTHER MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILY ARE ABLE TO ATTEND. THEY CAN THEREFORE PARTICIPATE IN CONVERSATION ABOUT THESE TOPICS. THEY FEEL MORE CONFIDENT THAT THEY HAVE RELEVANT, CURRENT THINGS TO TALK ABOUT.

THREE -- TELEVISION CAN DELIVER SOME SERVICES TO THE ELDERLY AND CAN DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER SERVICES.

HOW WELL DOES TELEVISION MEET THESE NEEDS? GENERALLY, OUR COMMITTEE FOUND, NOT WELL. THE PRESENTATIONS THIS MORNING CONFIRM THIS.

SO WHAT CAN BE DONE TO CHANGE THIS SITUATION? HOW CAN PROGRAM AND ADVERTISING CONTENT BE IMPROVED? HOW CAN YOU USE YOUR RESEARCH FINDINGS TO CHANGE TELEVISION? WHAT OTHER RESEARCH WOULD BE USEFUL?

FIRST OF ALL, IT IS NECESSARY TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT REGULATE CONTENT. SECTION 326 OF THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1934 SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITS THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION - THE FCC - FROM CENSORING OR INTERFERING WITH BROADCASTERS' FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. THE FCC CANNOT INFRINGE UPON FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS. THEREFORE, YOU CANNOT EXPECT ANY FORM OF LEGISLATION THAT WOULD PROHIBIT BROADCASTERS FROM AIRING PROGRAMS CONTAINING CERTAIN STEREOTYPES. THE PROBLEMS OF ALLOWING THE GOVERNMENT OR THE FCC OR ANY GROUP TO DEFINE WHAT CONSTITUTES UNDESIRABLE STEREOTYPES SHOULD BE READILY APPARENT.

BROADCASTING, HOWEVER, REQUIRES THE USE OF A VALUABLE AND SCARCE PUBLIC RESOURCE -- THE ELECTROMAGNETIC SPECTRUM. IN ORDER TO OBTAIN LICENSES FROM THE FCC TO BROADCAST, THE BROADCASTER, UNDER THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1934, MUST ACCEPT

RESPONSIBILITY AS A "PUBLIC TRUSTEE" AND MUST MEET THE INTERESTS, NEEDS, AND CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY WHICH HE IS LICENSED TO SERVE.

LICENSEES, THEREFORE, HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO ASCERTAIN COMMUNITY PROBLEMS. THIS MUST BE DONE BY CONSULTING WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS AND BY CONDUCTING GENERAL PUBLIC SURVEYS. THE ELDERLY ARE ON THE "COMMUNITY ASCERTAINMENT CHECKLIST," WHICH MEANS BROADCASTERS ARE REQUIRED TO MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ELDERLY. THIS PROVIDES A MAIN VEHICLE THROUGH WHICH COMPLAINTS CAN BE LODGED AGAINST BROADCASTERS.

EVERY THREE YEARS, TELEVISION LICENSES MUST BE RENEWED. AT THAT TIME, BROADCASTERS MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY ARE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY THEY ARE SERVING. ANY COMMUNITY GROUP -- INCLUDING THE ELDERLY -- MAY CHALLENGE THE LICENSE BY SUBMITTING FACTUAL INFORMATION REGARDING ITS COMPLAINTS. THIS IS WHERE YOUR RESEARCH EFFORTS CAN BE INVALUABLE. MANY COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS DO NOT HAVE THE SKILLS, TIME, OR RESOURCES TO PROVIDE THE FACTUAL INFORMATION NECESSARY TO CHALLENGE LICENSES. BUT YOU CAN BE SURE THAT THOSE THEY ARE CHALLENGING, THE BROADCASTERS, DO. THEY COME BEFORE THE FCC AND COURTS ARMED WITH DATA. RESEARCH BASED ON INDIVIDUAL STATION PROGRAMMING OVER THE THREE-YEAR

LICENSE PERIOD COULD BE INVALUABLE.

THE AMOUNT OF TIME BROADCASTERS DEVOTE TO PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMMING AND PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS ALSO IS CONSIDERED AT LICENSE RENEWAL TIME. THOSE CONCERNED ABOUT GETTING MESSAGES AND INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES TO THE ELDERLY MIGHT UTILIZE THESE CHANNELS. AGAIN, THE LICENSEE SHOULD BE THE FOCAL POINT FOR YOUR EFFORTS.

ANOTHER WAY TO GET AT CONTENT IS THROUGH STRUCTURAL MEASURES. IF PROGRAM CONTENT IS A SYMPTOM OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY, EFFORTS TO CHANGE CONTENT SHOULD BE DIRECTED AT CHANGING STRUCTURE. THERE ARE SEVERAL STRUCTURAL DIMENSIONS. THE MOST IMPORTANT IS OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL.

STRUCTURAL MEASURES RELATING TO OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL PERTAIN TO RESTRICTIONS ON MULTIPLE OWNERSHIP AND ASSISTANCE TO MINORITIES TO ENABLE THEM TO OWN STATIONS. THIS IS PREMISED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT DIVERSITY OF OWNERSHIP -- PARTICULARLY DIVERSITY IN THE TYPES OF PEOPLE RUNNING BROADCAST STATIONS -- WILL PROMOTE DIFFERENT IDEAS AND DIFFERENT PROGRAM CONTENT. THUS, BLACK GROUPS BELIEVE BLACK OWNERS, WRITERS, AND PRODUCERS WILL PROGRAM FOR BLACK PEOPLE'S NEEDS; WOMENS' GROUPS DEMAND WOMEN OWNERS AND PRODUCERS; AND THE GRAY PANTHERS DEMAND THAT

MORE WRITERS AND PRODUCERS OVER 65 BE UTILIZED BY THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY. RESEARCH RELATED TO THIS ISSUE OF DIVERSITY WOULD BE VERY VALUABLE AT THIS TIME, PARTICULARLY SINCE THERE HAS BEEN TALK AT THE FCC AND AMONG SOME MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE OF ELIMINATING OWNERSHIP RESTRICTIONS.

ANOTHER STRUCTURAL MEASURE RELATING TO OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL CONCERNS ADVERTISING, THE ECONOMIC BASE OF COMMERCIAL TELEVISION. IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT PROGRAMS ARE SELECTED FOR SHOWING NOT ON THE BASIS OF THEIR AUDIENCE APPEAL, BUT ON THE BASIS OF THE MARKET VALUE OF THE AUDIENCE THAT WATCHES THE PROGRAM. PROGRAMS ARE BAIT FOR ATTRACTING AN AUDIENCE THAT CAN BE SOLD TO ADVERTISERS. SINCE THERE SEEMS TO BE NO ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVE TO THIS REALITY -- EXCEPT FOR PUBLIC-SUPPORTED BROADCASTING -- ADVERTISERS ARE A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH.

IF THE ELDERLY ARE NOT APPEALED TO, ONE REASON IS BECAUSE ADVERTISERS HAVE NOT RECOGNIZED THEM AS AN IMPORTANT MARKET. ADVERTISERS ARE MOSTLY INTERESTED IN PROGRAMS THAT WILL ATTRACT THE MOST PROFITABLE MARKET - THE 18-49 YEAR OLDS. PERHAPS RESEARCH DIRECTED AT ADVERTISERS TO MAKE THEM AWARE THAT PERSONS 65 AND OLDER REPRESENT A \$60 BILLION DOLLAR MARKET WOULD BE WORTHWHILE.

IN CLOSING, I WOULD LIKE TO DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO SOME POTENTIALLY EXCITING ALTERNATIVES TO COMMERCIAL TELEVISION, OTHER THAN PUBLIC BROADCASTING. THESE INCLUDE VIDEODISCS, SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION, AND CABLE. I PARTICULARLY WANT TO NOTE THE GROWTH IN THE CABLE TELEVISION INDUSTRY AND THE POTENTIAL IT OFFERS AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO BROADCASTING.

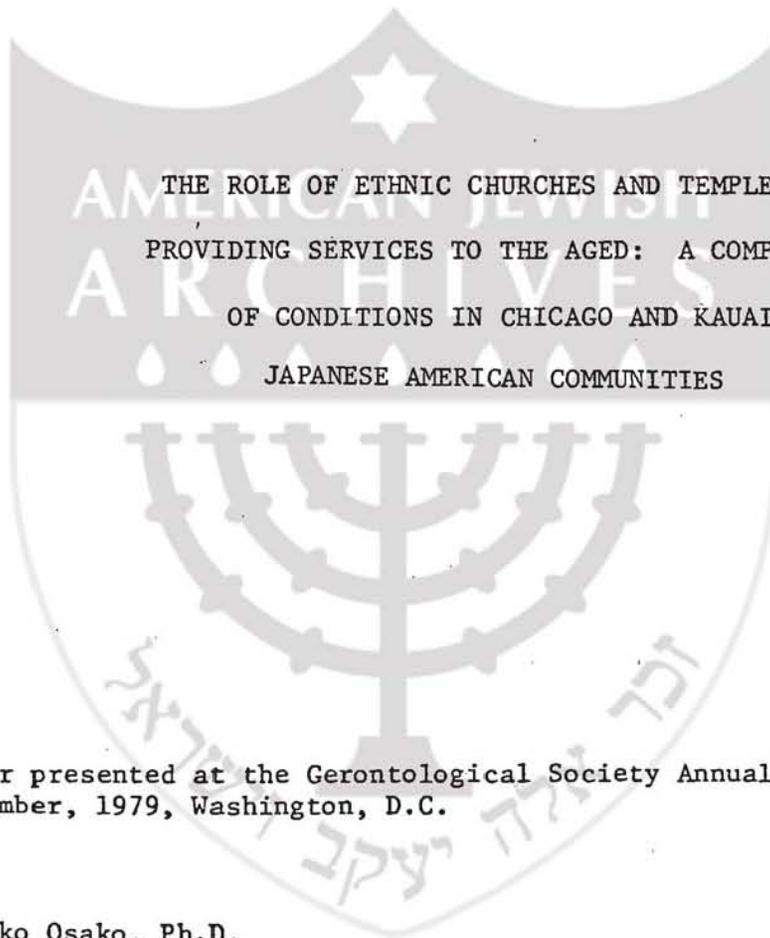
IN MANY AREAS, CABLE ALREADY PROVIDES 36 CHANNELS. FOR THE MOST PART, CABLE OPERATORS ARE VERY EAGER TO FIND PROGRAMS FOR THESE CHANNELS, AND FORTUNATELY FOR US, THERE ARE SOME VERY ENTERPRISING INDIVIDUALS. AMONG THEM IS KEN SILVERMAN OF CINEMERICA SATELLITE NETWORK. STARTING IN 1980, CINEMERICA WILL BE OFFERING TO CABLE SYSTEM OPERATORS 12 HOURS OF DAILY ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMMING, CALLED "PRIME TIME," ORIENTED TO THE 50-PLUS POPULATION.

CABLE OPERATORS MUST OBTAIN FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES A FRANCHISE TO BUILD A CABLE SYSTEM. SINCE CABLE IS A GEOGRAPHIC MONOPOLY AND A PROFITABLE BUSINESS, THERE IS STIFF COMPETITION AMONG CABLE COMPANIES FOR THESE FRANCHISES. LOCALITIES, THEREFORE, HAVE CONSIDERABLE BARGAINING POWER IN GRANTING CABLE FRANCHISES AND CAN BUILD INTO THEIR CONTRACTS REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAMS CATERING TO SPECIFIC COMMUNITY

INTERESTS. THIS COULD, OF COURSE, INCLUDE THE ELDERLY. IT MIGHT BEHOOVE ASSOCIATIONS FOR THE ELDERLY TO INVESTIGATE WHO HAS CABLE FRANCHISING AUTHORITY IN THEIR AREA AND TO MAKE THEIR PRESENCE AND NEEDS KNOWN TO THESE AUTHORITIES.

IN CONCLUSION, YOUR RESEARCH EFFORTS CAN BE VERY USEFUL IN APPLYING PRESSURE BOTH TO BROADCAST LICENSEES WHO ARE PUBLIC TRUSTEES OF THE NATION'S AIRWAVES AND TO THOSE LOCAL AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR GRANTING CABLE FRANCHISES IN YOUR COMMUNITIES. BECAUSE OF OUR FIRST AMENDMENT, IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT THE TELEVISION INDUSTRY AND THOSE TO WHOM THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE, THE PUBLIC -- RATHER THAN THE GOVERNMENT -- SHOULD BE THE PARTIES RESPONSIBLE FOR TELEVISION CONTENT. THE FCC ONLY HAS POWER TO ENFORCE BROADLY DEFINED PUBLIC INTEREST STANDARDS THAT REQUIRE BROADCASTERS TO BE RESPONSIVE TO THAT PUBLIC.

I THANK YOU FOR HEARING ME OUT AND HOPE MY REMARKS HAVE BEEN USEFUL.



THE ROLE OF ETHNIC CHURCHES AND TEMPLES IN
PROVIDING SERVICES TO THE AGED: A COMPARISON
OF CONDITIONS IN CHICAGO AND KAUAI
JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Paper presented at the Gerontological Society Annual Meetings,
November, 1979, Washington, D.C.

Masako Osako, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

A serious obstacle to providing adequate services to Asian Americans is their unwillingness to disclose problems to social service professionals. Using data obtained in Chicago, Illinois, and Kauai, Hawaii, this paper explores the potential of religious organizations in bridging the gap between social service agencies and elderly Japanese Americans. In Chicago, churches and temples provide effective preventive services to their aged members as they offer a social circle for interaction and activity. Moreover, since Christian and Buddhist teachings focus heavily on such matters as personal problems and fulfillment, in certain religious contexts personal problems are freely discussed and shared. As indicated by the example of Buddhist temples on Kauai, religious groups are especially effective in preparing old people for eventual death.

At this time, however, the Chicago religious groups' activities are confined to their own congregational matters. Priests and pastors are only minimally involved in either the social service agency's outreach programs or in the referral of potential cases to agencies. Also, they fail to influence the goals and programs of the ethnic community.

The failure to use their potential can be explained by the nature of their own professional backgrounds and of the ethnic community. Some Christian and most Buddhist personnel were trained in Japanese seminaries, where counseling and the use of social services are not included in the curriculum. Therefore, they do not have the technical skill either to provide formal service or to deal with local agencies. In addition, there is a widespread notion in the ethnic community in Chicago that religious matters belong to the churches and temples, but social services are strictly under the jurisdiction of community organizations. Such perceptions limit the religious groups' involvement in the delivery of services.

A serious obstacle in providing adequate services to Asian Americans is their own unwillingness to disclose their problems to helping professionals (Levy, 1973; California State Department, 1975; Fujii, 1976a, 1976b). Consequently, a problem is often concealed for a long time without receiving proper attention. Only when it becomes unmanageable is the case brought to the attention of a service agency. This postponement is costly in several ways: those with problems suffer needlessly while others are waiting to help; the treatment is less effective when the problem has reached an advanced stage, and thus the cure takes more time. The Asian Americans' resistance to professional care is demonstrated dramatically by their infrequent use of social services, despite the unusually high suicide rates among elderly Chinese women (Cavan, 1965; Lyman, 1974). Is there no institution that can bridge the gap between families and social service agencies? My research on Chicago's support network and that on Kauai in Hawaii reveals that churches and temples have significant potential to bridge the gap. Using the Japanese American experience, this paper examines the functions and the potential of religious groups to provide effective social services to the Asian population.

Methods

The data for this report were derived from several sources. (1) In the spring of 1979, structured telephone interviews were conducted with twenty-two religious leaders in Chicago. The interviews focused on the organizational activities of the church or temple and the respondent's views on social problems and the delivery services of

the Japanese American community (Osako, 1979). (2) I participated in a week-long summer conference organized by Japanese American Christian churches. Six ministers and roughly forty church members from the area participated in the retreat. Sharing meals, recreation, and group discussion sessions, I observed the activities of Japanese American Christians. (3) Over the last two years, I have visited several temples and churches and participated in their services and informal discussions, including more than ten visits to a large Buddhist temple and participation in six group discussion sessions with the small congregation of a newer Buddhist sect. (4) In addition, some pertinent information about individual Buddhists and Christians was supplied by a recent survey of 250 Japanese Americans in Chicago (Osako, 1976, 1979).

The Kauai data were gathered during the summer of 1979. Joining the University of Tokyo research team, I studied the evolution of Buddhist institutions in Hawaii. The information discussed in this paper is based on interviews with four priests and their parishioners, mostly middle-aged Nisei and elderly Issei. Christian churches in Hawaii were not included in this analysis.

Because the fieldwork was much more extensive in Chicago, the experience of Japanese Americans in the Midwest is the major focus of this paper. Compared to Chicago groups, many of Kauai's temples enjoy familylike relationships within each congregation. Admitting the vast differences between urban Chicago and rural Kauai, the Hawaiian institutions are examples of what can be achieved by Japanese American religious organizations.

Japanese American Churches and Temples in Chicago and Kauai

In many ways, Chicago, Illinois and Kauai, Hawaii, are opposites. The former is a metropolis with a population of over three million, while the latter is a predominantly rural island with 30,000 inhabitants (Matsuda, 1975; Anderson, 1975). Only 0.05% of Chicago's population is of Japanese descent, in contrast to a Japanese population of more than 50% on the Hawaiian Island. The full-scale Japanese settlement in the Midwest began after World War II, but it dates back to the late 19th century in Hawaii. There are twenty-one churches and temples in the Chicago metropolitan area serving the Japanese American community. Reflecting the history of Japanese settlement, all were built during the last thirty-five years. In contrast, most of the eighteen religious organizations serving Japanese Americans on Kauai were founded at the beginning of this century. I will now discuss the basic programs of the religious institutions in Chicago, followed by a brief description of Kauai Buddhist temples.

Although 98% of the Issei were Buddhists prior to their emigration, today a large segment of the Japanese American population is Christian. My survey of 250 Japanese Americans and the religious groups' reports on membership suggest that the ethnic population in Chicago is almost evenly divided between Christians and Buddhists. There are eight churches in Chicago in contrast to thirteen temples. Five of the groups (three Christian and two Buddhist), have more than 200 members each, while the others are much smaller, with average memberships around thirty. Large and small congregations offer rather different types of programs for their members.

All the large associations in Chicago not only meet for services several times on Sunday but also offer various programs throughout the week. Both Christian and Buddhist services closely approximate the orthodox Sunday service in American protestant churches (Lyman, 1976; Petersen, 1971). A major exception is that in the temple, instead of partaking of communion, the participants burn incense at the altar. On every Sunday, at least one service is conducted in Japanese for the benefit of the Issei. The participants can expect a brief social hour with coffee and tea after each service and in many places a monthly luncheon is prepared by women members.

During the week, adult members rarely participate in the temple activities, except those core members who are working at special projects like the Ginza Festival. Throughout the week, the temples offer classes in judo, calligraphy, flower arranging, and Japanese language. These programs, offered for both members and the public are important sources of funding for the temple. Youthful members not only participate in these classes, but also form teams to represent the temples in city-wide Japanese American sports contests.

In contrast, the majority of Christian church activities during the week are strictly for the members, who meet in small groups for bible reading, prayer, and discussion. The groups are segregated by sex and age. These small groups form the basic social unit in the church. One minister stressed the importance of the small units for the solidarity of the church because through close interaction in the group, the members cultivate religious commitment and a sense of community. In the summer, three large churches jointly host a one-

week seminar near Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. This is a highlight of the year for these churches and serves to bring the congregation together.

Social services offered by religious groups are limited to infrequent counseling. Typically, when a minister or a priest senses that someone is having serious problems, he counsels him informally. The frequency of such sessions varies depending on the minister's sensitivity and his congregation's willingness to accept such assistance. Generally speaking, Christian ministers are more active in this matter. Reflecting this difference, all the respondents in the Japanese American survey who listed a minister or priest as one of their three closest confidants (i.e., 5%) were Christians.

Smaller religious groups are mostly congregations of newer Buddhist sects, such as Sokagakkai and P.L Group (Helton, 1966; White, 1970), which are known for their emphasis on concern with daily problems as well as active proselytizing required of the members. The groups range in size from 15 to 30 members. Unlike large associations, their official function is limited to a few meetings a month. The service includes a group chanting from the scripture, a sermon by the priest, and an informal group discussion with him (or her). The small congregation I observed held services in the priest's living room and the informal discussion around the kitchen table.

Generally, the members of a small congregation form a close-knit circle around the leader. The community spirit is explained by the group's small size, the nature of the interaction, and the homogeneous social background of the congregation. For instance, one new Buddhist

sect serves war brides, while two others have a predominantly Kibei Nisei, and Hawaiian-Japanese membership. It appears that these small groups meet the needs of special subgroups in the Japanese American community.

The history of Buddhist missions is much older in Kauai than in the Midwest. In the late 19th century, several Japanese Buddhist sects sent traveling monks to the Hawaiian Islands to preach to the plantation laborers and conduct memorial services in the Japanese settlement (Hasegawa, 1963; Judo Sect, 1978; Soto Shu, 1976). In 1889, the first Buddhist station was established in Hawaii, followed by the establishment of Honganji Temple at Waimea in the following year. In the following few decades, over a dozen temples were built on the island of Kauai alone. Except for the newer Buddhist sects like Sokagakkai, most of twenty existing temples on the island were organized prior to 1920

Today there are twenty temples in Kauai, representing seven traditional Buddhist sects, and a few newer schools. The congregations range in size from 30 to 150 families. The Kauai temple schedules resemble those in Japan more than do their Chicago counterparts. Instead of having a service on Sunday in the protestant style, the Kauai temples follow the Japanese calendar. For instance, a Zen temple offers special services to Buddha and the deceased on the first, fifteenth and twenty-fifth days of the month. In addition, on the family's request, the priest periodically performs anniversary and memorial services. Such a service includes a chant by a priest, the participants, and the sharing of a meal.

In larger temples, the congregation is organized into 'subgroups by sex and age (such as women's division, men's division, youth group, and children's Sunday school). Since the island's Japanese Hawaiian population is predominantly middle-aged or elderly, the youth program is underdeveloped. There is a division of labor between sexes. Men take care of construction, yard work and house repair, while women are in charge of cooking, cleaning, and supplying flowers for the altar. At the temples where the hall is being constructed by the members, volunteers come daily to the site. In another temple, adult members meet every other week to produce a few hundred bags of taro-chips (chips made from taro rather than from potatoes). They sell for \$1.00 per bag, adding substantially to the temple's revenues. In short, the temple is as much a social group as a spiritual community.

Bridging the Gap between the Agency and Potential Clients

The religious organization can perform two major roles in bridging the gap between social service agencies and potential clients. First, they can provide preventive measures; and second, they can facilitate the use of social services. At this time, priests and pastors in Chicago are only minimally involved either in the social service agencies' outreach programs or in referring potential cases to agencies. Nevertheless, as discussed below, the act of getting involved in church and temple activities - and the religious teachings themselves - may have therapeutic effects for the elderly.

The religious organization is probably of most immediate value to its elderly members in that it provides a social circle. My survey of 110 Issei in Chicago reveals that they spend most of their time

at home caring for themselves. Only a small minority take courses or work at workshops run by the Japanese American Services Committee. Thus, for many, the church and temple offer the only opportunities for active group participation. The elderly who attend churches and temples develop networks of friends centered on the religious circle, and often regard Sunday services as the highlight of the week. For example, one interviewee reported that she always had her hair set on Friday to look nice on Sunday. The strength of their commitment in the worship service is suggested by their good attendance during the blizzard of 1978-1979. Most churches and temples reported that during these snowy months, the Japanese language services had better attendance than the English gatherings.

With their emphasis on participation and fellowship, religious organizations offer a unique opportunity for the elderly person to be socially active. There are many events in which to participate, including visits to invalids at nursing homes, bible classes, monthly luncheons, bazaars, and rummage sales. In one temple, the members of the women's division spend several hours preparing an elaborate monthly luncheon. To earn a few thousand dollars, a bazaar requires good organization, lengthy preparation, and a committed work force. Only concerted group action can produce hundreds of paper flowers, silk cushions, and teriyaki plates. The elderly Isseis traditional skill in Japanese cookery (for example, in preparing an especially elaborate type of sushi), is much appreciated on such an occasion.

In the small gathering, an informal group meeting with the priest follows the religious services. At such a session, the priest

asks each member how he is doing in his daily life and in his proselytizing. With amazing frankness, the group shares intimate information ranging from a husband's drinking to the clinical details of an intestinal ailment and a confession about cheating in contributions. The conversation centers around the dialog between the priest and a member, with others listening or providing supplementary information. The priest responded to each member with suggestions, encouragement, or reprimands. To these, the members responded with "Yes, thank you, Sir. I understand," "I will try," or at times with tearful nodding. The participants rarely objected or protested to the leader.

Compared to Chicago, membership participation is more extensive and continuous in Kauai temples. Commonly, the members construct the temples themselves, bringing materials, tools, and doing the labor themselves. At a construction site I visited, a retired carpenter was responsible for designing the building and supervising the older men who work daily. Their sons also came on weekends to work on the jobs that required heavy labor. The construction work started early in the morning proceeding at a leisurely speed, and ended with an elaborate Japanese lunch prepared by woman members. This type of project sometimes takes more than a few years. Understandably, the involved members experience deep pride and develop a group spirit about the project.

The Kauai temple members also take an active part in fundraising. In addition to the Bon festival and rummage sales, they donate goods and services for the temple's upkeep. Their contributions take various forms: They may repair the temple building or

the priest's residence. They may bring flowers, fruits, rice, and vegetables from their gardens. A fish store owner supplied raw tuna at a substantial discount. A cab driver had donated his 1975 Chevrolet for the minister's use. In short, much interaction is carried on without the medium of money.

In this circumstance, the relationship between the priest and his followers is usually very close. In small Kauai towns, because there is no mail delivery to individual homes, several families share a post office box. A young priest wins the gratitude of older members (who rarely have cars) by delivering mail to their homes daily. In return for such service, the members supply him with fresh fish, home grown vegetables, hand sewn clothing for his children, and even home brewed liquor. Therefore, despite his meager monthly salary (less than \$300), he and his family enjoy a comfortable life.

The trust between the priest and his congregation is also indicated by the practice of funeral reservation. While they are still healthy, many elderly widows make an arrangement about the details of their own funerals with their favorite priest. The arrangements may cover the types of chanting, offerings, flowers, and the list of guests to be invited. They believe that, like a wedding, the funeral should reflect one's status and taste. Furthermore, a properly performed funeral is indispensable for safe passage to the other world. In this way, a close tie between the priest and his elderly followers is a significant source of security for the latter.

In addition to the benefits of participation in group activities, the concern of Christian and Buddhist theologies with daily problems

deserve some attention in the present discussion. Risking an oversimplification, it may be said that orthodox Christian theology regards human suffering as a trial, repentance, or punishment. The Japanese American church concurs basically on this view, but with a different emphasis. Throughout my observation, the preachers stressed that God is unconditionally loving, caring, and understanding to anyone. The image of God preached at the Japanese American churches closely resembles Amidabutsu, a female Buddha of Mercy. A minister lectured at a Sunday service:

Whatever difficulty you may be going through, God is always with you and will understand you. Appreciate your sufferings as an opportunity to prove to God how worthy you are.

Clearly, this kind of permissive and positive interpretation of personal difficulty is conducive to free discussion of problems.

Discussions about coping with problems and attaining a happy life are in fact quite common in church meetings. At the week-long summer conference for Japanese American churches, three out of five adult discussion sessions were concerned with the pursuit of happiness and coping with daily stress. A bible reading class may turn into a pseudo-group--therapy session, where the participants can discuss problems in relation to the Biblical message. For example, at a Bible class that I attended, they discussed the verse: "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ: in turn the head of woman is the man" (Corinthians 11:3). The following discussion took place:

A woman of about thirty said:

My husband and I had an argument the other day. We saved about \$300 extra last month because both he and I worked overtime. He wants to buy a color TV to watch football games, but I am for a dishwasher. It is true that our TV does not have a clear picture, but as a

working mother, I desperately need a dishwasher. My husband says he will help me with the dishes, but I cannot count on his word, because he has said that many times, but never helped. Pastor, are you saying that according to the Bible, we should get a TV rather than a dishwasher?

The pastor replied:

Have faith in God. I recommend that first you and your husband have a good long talk. But if you still cannot agree, then you should get a TV, because that is what the Bible says.

In contrast to the notion of Christian salvation, which is to be attained by unfaltering faith in God, Buddhism preaches that all human suffering is caused by insufficient understanding of the laws of the cosmos (Yu-lan, 1960). A man's desires, which arise from the lack of such understanding are the fundamental cause of all the miseries in the world. To illustrate: a man becomes troubled by poverty because he desires wealth. However, in view of cosmic laws, material wealth is immaterial. Consequently, contented life can be achieved by attaining proper knowledge and eliminating one's improper desires. Men lament separation, aging, and death. They do so because they fail to understand that meeting is the beginning of separation and that birth is the beginning of aging and death. Because of this orientation, the Buddhist priest urges his followers to understand the causes of their suffering. This approach encourages the follower to examine the problem with detachment rather than to be overcome by it.

No Buddhist priest today lectures to the member who seeks help that his suffering is the result of his wrong-doing in a previous life or that he has no choice but to passively endure it. Yet, they are clearly influenced by Buddhist ideas in their counseling. They encourage their followers to look at the causes of problems, particularly,

past actions and excessive desires, which may be causing the pain (Cox, 1973; Lebra, 1972; Lesh, 1970).

In both Christianity and Buddhism, death is a major focus of the teaching. Since much has already been discussed about the implication of the Occidental religions' counseling in regard to death, I will confine the discussion to the Buddhist interpretation of death. In contrast to Christianity, Buddhism does not associate death with finality and tragedy. For the Buddhist who believes in the existence of life after death, dying is a natural and positive experience that promises freedom from the misery of this world. Furthermore, according to the principle of reincarnation, a man will be born again as another being. Buddha preached that the quality of life in the next existence depends entirely upon a man's conduct in this life. Therefore, in Buddhist theology, death does not signal a final stage. Rather, it is merely a passage in one's life like birth and marriage, a stage in the eternal cycle of reincarnation.

Given this view of life and death, Buddhists, especially Zen followers, believe that one must consider death as a pivotal point to reflect upon one's daily conduct. Zen, for instance, stresses that a man must live the present moment as best as he can regardless of his age. Old people are therefore expected to assume an active role, at least spiritually and psychologically, in determining the quality of their life and death.

As the church and temple offer older people opportunity for meaningful interaction and a positive attitude toward solving problems, they also provide a viable social circle for young people. Several beneficial effects can be anticipated from this circumstance. First,

life is less precarious and more satisfying if one is integrated into a cohesive community. In turn, the improved well-being of the Nisei is conducive to harmonious intergenerational relations. Second, as the community attempts to keep its members in line with its customs, each member's filial behavior is under his peers' scrutiny. Admittedly, neither Buddhist or Christian religions regard filial piety as a major ethos, but respect for parents is consistent with the general concepts of Christian "love" and Buddhist "mercy." Finally, church and temple friends serve as a support group. In my recent survey of 250 Japanese Americans in Chicago, three out of four respondents listed a friend as a significant confidant with whom they can share problems as well as happiness. Since many Nisei share the problems associated with aging parents, such as senility and whether to place them in nursing homes, the moral support and guidance of friends are very valuable.

Although the Chicago Japanese American churches and temples offer valuable services to the aged in their congregations, they maintain a low profile in other ethnic community affairs. For instance, there was a recent attempt to establish a Pan Asian social service agency in Chicago. Several organizational meetings were held involving community leaders. But, except for one priest who attended the first few sessions and later dropped out, no Japanese American religious people became involved in this venture. To give another example, no priest or minister is serving on the board of directors of the JAACL or JASC. In short, there is a clear division between religious and secular leaders in the ethnic community.

To summarize: churches and temples in Chicago provide viable

preventive services to their members, especially when the minister or pastor takes an active interest in the well-being of the organization. Despite the Japanese American's general unwillingness to disclose problems to people other than family members, and especially those in the position of authority, personal difficulties are shared among members of the congregation and with the pastor. Religious groups are especially effective in preparing old people for eventual death. But at this time, the group religious activities are kept within each congregation. Priests and pastors in Chicago are only minimally involved in either the social service agencies' outreach programs or in referring potential cases to agencies. Nor do they influence the goals and programs of the ethnic community.

Reasons for Religious Organizations' Limited Involvement

Clearly these religious groups have ample potential for bridging the gap between social service professionals and clients. Then what factors can account for the failure to use this potential? The answers to this question are suggested by the religious professional's orientation and background as well as the nature of the ethnic community's power structure.

The priests are generally trained in Japanese seminaries or temples. Unlike divinity school curriculums in the United States, the priestly training in Japan does not include studies in psychology or counseling. Second, the mainstream of traditional Buddhism in modern Japan does not stress its services to the unfortunate. During the three centuries of Tokugawa rule (1600-1868), Buddhism was designated

as the official religion (Reischauer, 1965). As a result, the focus of the temple's activities shifted from social reform and services to the registration of parish members and the performance of routine rituals relating to ancestor worship and funerals.

However, the educational and historical background of the priests should not be regarded as an intrinsic limitation to the development of social consciousness. As discussed below, the priests in Kauai have received comparable training, but they are actively concerned with the spiritual as well as practical well-being of their members, especially the elderly. To realize the potential of religious organizations, it is essential that the practitioner become aware of opportunities to help his followers.

Added to the various levels of consciousness as to the role of churches and temples in looking after the members' nonspiritual well-being, the lack of technical information, skill, and resources is another important factor that limits the religious practitioner's effective involvement in delivering services to the elderly. Except for some Christian ministers, who have been trained in the United States, most pastors and priests have no formal training in counseling and social work. The Buddhist priests who received their training in Japan are especially unfamiliar with the American social welfare system.

If a church or temple attempts to develop its own facilities for distributing services, it will face more serious obstacles. Virtually all the ministers and priests lack experience in designing and writing grant proposals. During my interviews, some of them expressed a desire to establish adult day-care centers, but for priests trained

in Japan it is nearly impossible to write a solid proposal or work effectively with public agency officials.

Some observers may suspect that the nature of ideologies partially accounts for the religious groups' failure to provide adequate social services. Christian churches in the United States have a long history of undertaking social service programs, but the Buddhist temple, with its stress on otherworldly concerns may appear unqualified for the task. Historically and theologically, such a suspicion is unfounded. Many Buddhist institutions throughout a few thousand years of history have provided havens for the oppressed and deprived. Orphanages, leper colonies, nursing homes, and homes for battered wives were well-known concerns of Buddhist institutions (Kitagawa, 1966).

Difficulties with cooperation among organizations may also be one factor that discourages the churches and temples from becoming actively involved in the service delivery network. This is less of a problem with churches which have already formed a loose cooperative relationship by hosting sports tournaments and summer conferences. Cooperation among Buddhist temples is more problematic because each temple is a branch belonging to a Buddhist sect in Japan. There are seven major schools in traditional Buddhism in addition to a few dozen smaller sects which were founded recently. Because of rivalry among sects and strong ties between the headquarters in Japan and the branch temple in Chicago, it may indeed be difficult for the temples to start joint programs.

Finally, it is necessary to look beyond the religious' organizatins

to understand their relatively limited involvement in the community activities for the elderly. The Japanese American community has a centralized structure for delivering services. A community-based agency serves the community of 15,000 people. With a dues-paying membership of 900 and the annual budget of \$646,000, it offers a wide range of services to the Japanese American community. The list of its activities includes: family and individual counseling, education and cultural programs, social events, homemaker's services, hot meals for the aged and workshops.

There is no question that symbolically and practically, this community-based agency contributes significantly to the well-being of many Japanese Americans, but it also has its share of critics. According to them, the problems of the organization can be explained by its monopolitical position and its stagnated leadership. The present director has been in that position for the last twenty years. Its board members as well as the core supporters have remained largely unchanged for most of the last decade. The critics caution that when the staff and supporters identify their self-interest with the organizational prestige, the expansion of the program and facilities rather than the provision of quality services becomes their primary pre-occupation.

Countering these critics, the supporters of the ethnic social service center praise its leadership for stability and a willingness to adapt to a changing environment (e.g., a newly built apartment building for senior citizens and vocational training for former mental patients). But the agency is limited by the lack of funds and, at best, a static

membership. In these circumstances, it may be less than enthusiastic about the emergence of competing agencies within the ethnic group, even though the agency currently serves only a fraction of Japanese Americans in the area. In a recent survey of 250 Issei and Nisei, 25% of the former and 10% of the latter have recently participated in the agency's activities (Osako, 1960).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The unwillingness of elderly Japanese Americans to seek professional help is explained by several factors (Kitano, 1969; Fujii, 1967, 1976; Atkinson, 1978). First, they are often unaware that their problems, such as senility, depression, and excessive drinking, can be treated. Second, there are still widespread fears about revealing their personal difficulties to nonfamily members. The reasons for the reluctance are many: there is a stigma attached to having problems; the admission of one's helplessness is a threat to one's self-image; and there is a fear of making oneself vulnerable by disclosing difficulties. Third, unfamiliarity with agency procedures coupled with language difficulties discourages the elderly Issei from seeking professional help.

The major finding of this paper is that in view of the specific difficulties experienced by older Japanese Americans, the churches and temples appear to have valuable potential for bridging the gap between services agencies and potential clients. Both Christian and Buddhist teachings focus heavily on the matters of personal problems and fulfillment. Therefore, in the religious context, they are respectable

issues. In addition, the relationship between the pastor or minister and members of the congregation is generally long-lasting and personal. This is a significant improvement over the often impersonal relationships between agencies and those in distress. Furthermore, within the Japanese American churches and temples, old people will not be limited by their language or through cultural misunderstanding on the part of those providing services. Thus, whether they participate in the agencies' outreach programs or as they provide services themselves, the religious institutions in the Japanese American community show promising potential.

A secondary finding of this paper is that, despite their potential, religious groups in Chicago's Japanese American community confine their efforts to informal, casual assistance to their members. This remains so, despite their potential and their expressed interest in more structured programs. What measures can be taken, then, to encourage their fuller integration into the network of service agencies? Given their background (discussed above), the workshops on counseling and other techniques as well as the public regulations and services for the aged appear very useful. For those who wish to provide services to the elderly, technical assistance in project design, proposal writing, and administration must be provided. These programs must accommodate the participants' interests and time schedule. They might also be given remuneration or a certificate as incentives. It is also advisable that such programs be organized in cooperation with the national religious association. Such cooperation is likely to bring greater legitimacy to the program and motivate a larger

number of people to participate.

All these measures appear fine, would be helpful, but success cannot be achieved without the support of the ethnic community, especially those in service professions. If they are unwilling to recognize the values of the church's and temple's involvement or become threatened by it, the present poor level of use of this valuable ethnic component is likely to persist.



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