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CLERGY AND NONCLERGY'S BELIEFS AND KNOWLEDGE  
ABOUT OLDER PEOPLE: IMPACT OF A PLANNED  
LEARNING EXPERIENCE

presented by

Betty Jean Youngman

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Major professor

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CLERGY AND NONCLERGY'S BELIEFS AND KNOWLEDGE  
ABOUT OLDER PEOPLE: IMPACT OF A PLANNED  
LEARNING EXPERIENCE

By

Betty Jean Youngman

A DISSERTATION

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## ABSTRACT

### CLERGY AND NONCLERGY'S BELIEFS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT OLDER PEOPLE: IMPACT OF A PLANNED LEARNING EXPERIENCE

By

Betty Jean Youngman

This study was designed to survey clergy and nonclergy's knowledge and beliefs about the elderly and to determine the effect of a planned learning experience (PLE) on clergy and nonclergy's beliefs and knowledge about the elderly. Because the church is the voluntary institution in the typical American community in which older people are most apt to participate, the role the church assumes in ministering to the elderly is important.

Social learning theory provided a conceptual orientation for the study. There were 64 subjects in the study; 26 clergy and 38 nonclergy. The clergy included 6 women and 20 men; mean age of the clergy was 46. The nonclergy group contained 8 men and 30 women; group mean age of nonclergy was 54.

Subjects were participants in two "Workshops for Religious Leadership on Aging" PLE's sponsored by the Michigan Office of Services to Aging's Ecumenical Interfaith

Task Force on Ministry and Aging held at Petoskey and Roscommon, Michigan in the spring of 1978. During the PLE's Kilty and Feld's Elderly Attitude Survey (1976) and Palmore's Facts on Aging Quiz (1977) were administered as pretests and posttests to measure beliefs and knowledge about the elderly.

The t-test was used to analyze pretest and posttest data related to hypotheses about three variables: negative beliefs, positive beliefs, and knowledge.

The data showed a significant difference in nonclergy's positive beliefs before and after the planned learning experience. Pretest and posttest mean scores indicated that nonclergy were significantly more positive in their beliefs about older people after the PLE.

The data confirmed the hypothesis that clergy's positive beliefs about the elderly would not differ significantly before and after one planned learning experience. No significant difference was found before or after the PLE, although the clergy's mean scores were more positive after the PLE.

No significant difference between clergy and non-clergy's positive beliefs about the elderly was found before the PLE's. The pretest mean score for the clergy was higher, less positive, than the pretest nonclergy mean, but the difference was not significant.

When clergy and nonclergy's negative beliefs about older people were assessed before the planned learning experiences, no significant difference between the two groups was found.

Neither clergy nor nonclergy's negative beliefs about the elderly were changed significantly by the planned learning experience.

It was hypothesized that both clergy and nonclergy would exhibit significantly higher levels of knowledge about the elderly after the PLE. The data supported this idea in regard to the clergy, but not in relation to the nonclergy. The clergy's mean scores increased significantly after the PLE, indicating a higher level of knowledge. Non-clergy's mean score differences denoted a nonsignificant gain in knowledge after the PLE. When pretest and posttest data from the combined clergy and nonclergy group were analyzed, a significant gain in knowledge was noted for the entire group.

Research is needed to determine how modifying attitudes and increasing knowledge about older people affects church programming and alters the interaction between the church and the elderly. Research is also needed by human ecologists to serve as a basis from which to develop PLE's in aging for professionals and nonprofessionals in the community.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The role the church assumes in ministering to old people is important. Moburg and Gray (1977) suggested that of all the voluntary institutions in the typical American community, the church is the one in which older people are most apt to participate; and they are not expected to retire from it in their later years.

The church's role with older people is becoming even more important as the percentage of the population which is elderly increases. Brotman (1977) noted that the older population is growing faster than the younger population and suggested there would be "an increase in the proportion aged 65+ from 10.5% to 11.7% in 2000" (p. 206).

As the proportion of older people in the population increases, it is essential that clergy and lay leaders realize how the church can help older people with such developmental task accomplishments as adapting activities to reserves of energy and preparing for eventual death by building beliefs which allow them to live and die in peace. Moburg and Gray (1977) suggested that the clergy are instrumental in the contributions that the church can make toward task accomplishment.

Providing the elderly with opportunities to enrich and expand their lives also can be a part of the church's ministry. But in order to develop the structures necessary to promote opportunities for the elderly, clergy and lay leaders must understand their personal beliefs about older people and have adequate knowledge about older persons' educational, social, emotional, biological, and spiritual needs.

#### Statement of the Problem

This study is designed to survey clergy and non-clergy's knowledge and beliefs about the elderly and to determine the effect of a planned learning experience on clergy and nonclergy's beliefs and knowledge about the elderly.

#### Background of the Study

This researcher's interest in beliefs and knowledge about old people came about through a survey which she conducted in 1975. In a survey of religious education programs in Albion, Michigan churches, 18 clergymen were interviewed, and it became evident that their beliefs and knowledge about the elderly varied.

The survey showed that the clergy's education had not typically included gerontology, a finding which called into question the bases of the clergy's knowledge about old people. This question led logically to a question of the congregation's knowledge about the elderly. Both of

these questions appeared to be important because knowledge about the elderly is necessary to perceive and meet their needs. For example, church people who are knowledgeable about the developmental tasks of the elderly would be able to understand the importance of developing church programs that help old people accomplish their developmental tasks.

Another factor to be considered, however, was the clergy's and nonclergy's beliefs about the elderly, for it appeared possible that knowledge and beliefs could operate independently. A religious community's beliefs about older people could influence their response to the older people's needs. For example, church programs that contribute to the well being of the elderly might not be funded if the elderly are not believed to be worth the expenditure of money. People knowledgeable about the elderly's needs might at the same time hold beliefs which were not supportive of programs for the elderly.

To approach the problem of the relationship between knowledge and belief about the elderly and actions taken on the elderly's behalf, it seemed necessary to measure both knowledge and beliefs, attempt to modify them, and then determine if modification occurred. One-day educational experiences conducted by the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging's (OSA's) Ecumenical Interfaith Task Force on Ministry and Aging were chosen as the planned learning experience (PLE) through which changes in knowledge and beliefs could be assessed.

The researcher determined that this study could contribute information not currently available. Research related to the religious community's knowledge about the elderly has not been reported. One study compared clergy and nonclergy's beliefs but did not attempt to assess modification of beliefs through a planned learning experience.

Findings from this research could contribute to a better understanding of clergy and nonclergy's knowledge and beliefs about older people, and also serve as a basis for developing future planned learning experiences.

#### Conceptual Orientation

This study focuses on the attitudes and knowledge held by clergy and nonclergy before and after a planned learning experience. Mowrer (1960) has noted that there is a quality of indeterminacy in human behavior that permits behavioral change, and suggests that "there is a certain lawfulness about the changeability, this capacity for being modified by experience" (p. 10).

Social learning theory proposes that learning is a process of behavioral change. Learning generally cannot be directly observed, but may be inferred from such behavioral planned learning experiences. As Mowrer further states, learning "does not enable us at all accurately to predict what will be learned" (p. 10). Therefore, it is necessary

to remeasure performance after a planned learning experience to determine if learning seems to have occurred. Learning is conceptualized as a process of behavioral change which might be shaped to some degree by a PLE.

Assessing behavioral change following a PLE involves a consideration of the time lapse between the learning experience and measurement of possible change. Mowrer (1960) stated that "a response is more likely to have produced some rewarding or punishing event which occurs immediately thereafter . . . it is nevertheless true that the effect of an action performed at one point in time may be considerably delayed" (p. 377). It is recognized that learning might have occurred which could only be measured after a longer period of time.

Zimbarde, Ebbesen, and Maslach (1977) suggested that because attitudes are conceptualized as learned predispositions rather than innate, they are subject to change as a result of new information. Beliefs, as a component of attitudes (Krech, Crutchfield, & Ballachey, 1962), might therefore be conceptualized as subject to change. However, Sartain, North, Strange, and Chapman (1973) caution that "if we already have strong attitudes, we are likely to resist changing them" (p. 118). A PLE of one day's duration is recognized as a brief learning experience in which to effect change in beliefs held by subjects. As Mowrer states, however, there is a quality of indeterminacy which permits

behavioral change but the strength of beliefs held is an unknown factor. Change of beliefs is conceptualized as a difficult but possible conceptual outcome.

According to Zimbardo, Ebbeson, and Maslach, "All the techniques relevant to learning any new material should be relevant to learning and changing attitudes" (p. 21). The techniques of learning in this study are conceptualized as the presentations of the educational, social, emotional, biological, and spiritual concepts of the needs of the elderly. These concepts were emphasized through such means as talks, slides, and films.

#### Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in this study:

1. Negative and positive beliefs are separate and coexist.
2. Either positive or negative beliefs can be changed without altering the other.
3. Clergy would report more years of formal education than nonclergy.
4. Clergy's educational background would not typically include the study of aging.
5. The responses of clergy and nonclergy on the three self-report instruments represent their true beliefs and knowledge about older people.

### Hypotheses

Eight hypotheses which relate to the subjects' positive beliefs, negative beliefs, and knowledge were tested. These hypotheses are:

1. Prior to participation in a planned learning experience there are no significant differences between clergy and nonclergy's negative beliefs about the elderly.

2. Prior to participation in a planned learning experience there are no significant differences between clergy and nonclergy's positive beliefs about the elderly.

3. The clergy's negative beliefs about the elderly will not differ significantly before and after one planned learning experience.

4. The nonclergy's negative beliefs about the elderly will not differ significantly before and after one planned learning experience.

5. The clergy's positive beliefs about the elderly will not differ significantly before and after one planned learning experience.

6. The nonclergy's positive beliefs about the elderly will not differ significantly before and after one planned learning experience.

7. Clergy will exhibit a significantly higher level of knowledge about the elderly after one planned learning experience.

8. Nonclergy will exhibit a significantly higher level of knowledge about the elderly after one planned learning experience.

### Theoretical Definitions of Terms

Attitude. Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachey (1962) define an attitude as "An enduring system of positive or negative evaluations, emotional feelings, and pro or con tendencies with respect to a social object" (p. 177).

Beliefs. Krech, Crutchfield, and Bellachey (1962) define the relationship between beliefs and attitudes by stating that the cognitive component of attitude is "The beliefs about an object which are incorporated in an individual's attitude toward that object. Especially important are the evaluative beliefs" (p. 178).

Kilty and Feld (1976) further explain this orientation by noting that beliefs can be measured by using opinion statements.

Knowledge. Webster (1970) states that knowledge is "the fact or condition apprehending the truth or fact . . . . the fact or condition of having information" (p. 469).

Developmental task. Duvall (1977) offers this explanation: A developmental task is a "growth responsibility that arises at or about a certain time in the life of an individual, successful accomplishment of which leads to success in later tasks" (p. 485).



Elderly, aged or older person. Duvall (1977) has suggested that the elderly are those persons whose developmental tasks are associated with the seventh stage of human development.

Clergy. Those persons who because of particular academic training, experience and/or ordination are, or have been, in professional leadership positions in a congregation or institution (Baldus, Note 5).

Nonclergy. Those persons who because of lack of particular academic training, experience and/or ordination are not in professional leadership positions in congregations.

#### Operational Definitions

Attitude. The scores of the positive belief and negative belief statements in the Kilty and Feld (1976) instrument are used to measure attitudes. The positive belief statements and the negative belief statements are considered as separate scales.

Beliefs. The Kilty and Feld (1976) test is used to measure two belief groups. The beliefs and test items to be scored are:

1. Positive beliefs--Scores on items # 12, 13, 14, 16, 24, 26, 29, 33, 36, 41.
2. Negative beliefs--Scores on items # 4, 5, 19, 21, 22, 25, 42.

Elderly, aged, or older person. Those persons aged 65 or older are considered elderly for the purposes of this study. The chronological definition dates from the passage of the Social Security legislation in 1935. The Palmore test assumes this designation.

Clergy and nonclergy. In this research study the clergy and nonclergy are self-designated, because each subject must indicate if he or she is clergy or nonclergy.

Knowledge. The 25 statement measure developed by Palmore (1977), The Facts on Aging Quiz, is used to assess knowledge about older people.

Planned learning experience (PLE). In this study the planned learning experience was a one-day educational activity called "Workshops for Religious Leadership on Aging" sponsored by the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging's Ecumenical Interfaith Task Force on Ministry and Aging. Concepts considered were selected aspects of the educational, social, spiritual, biological, and emotional components of aging. Attitudes that were related to these conceptual components of aging were integrated into the PLE presentations.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The research literature relevant to this study will be reviewed under two general headings: research related to the elderly and research related to the church and the elderly.

#### Research Related to the Elderly

##### Attitudes Toward the Elderly

The research that has attempted to assess the attitudes of various age groups toward the elderly has been based on different types of research instruments, varying from Likert-type scales to autobiographical sketches. This variation in instruments used to assess attitudes can be noted in the research reviewed here.

Tuckman and Lorge (1953) developed a questionnaire consisting of misconceptions and stereotypes about old people. Areas included in the test were physical change, personality change, personality disintegration, conservatism, and resistance to change, family relationships, activities, and interests.

The 137 statement questionnaire was administered to 147 graduate students. The test provided for a yes or no

response to each statement. Tuckman and Lorge noted that "there is substantial acceptance of the misconception about old people . . . . The data obviously indicate that older people are living in a social climate which is not conducive to feelings of adequacy, usefulness, and security and to good adjustment in their later years" (pp. 259, 260).

Golde and Kogan (1959) used a sentence completion instrument to measure beliefs and attitudes toward old people and toward people in general. The researchers did not note how the terms belief and attitude were compared. Their study involved 100 student subjects ranging in age from 17 to 23. Some subjects appeared to be ambivalent in their comments about older people. This ambivalence may be the result of the subjects' having difficulty dealing with their own aging. The researchers suggested that their subjects wanted to remain active and avoid dependency on others as they grew older. "Activity seems to represent the best hope of avoiding the feared dependency. . . . An active life would permit one to deny being old" (p. 359).

The inquirers said that their data demonstrate that older people have different terms applied to them than are applied to people in general. The difference is not always unfavorable to older people. For example, when the sentence stem "Most of the (old) people I have known . . ." (p. 357), was responded to with descriptive adjectives, the subjects described older people more positively than people in general.

A Likert scale for assessing attitudes toward older people was developed by Kogan (1961). This scale was made up of matched positive-negative pairs that yielded two old people subscales: a scale containing 17 statements that made unfavorable reference to older people, and a 17 statement scale containing matched favorably worded items. Three samples of college undergraduates served as subjects. Kogan reported that unfavorable attitudes toward older people were associated with feelings of anomie and with negative dispositions toward ethnic minorities. He also noted that a nurturance factor derived from a personality inventory given to the subjects was significantly correlated with his old people scale. The more nurturant subjects were more positive toward older people.

A sentence completion procedure similar to the Kogan and Golde (1959) method of assessing attitudes was reported by Kogan and Shelton (1962). Kogan and Shelton permitted subjects to select their own set of responses. Twenty incomplete sentence stems were developed and were intended to reflect the emotions, physical attributes, interpersonal qualities, and values attributed to older people. There were two samples. One group of subjects ranged in age from 50 to 92. The second sample was college undergraduates. The researchers suggested:

In sum, the age differences observed in images and beliefs regarding old people are often suggestive of ambivalence,

conflict, and inaccurate perceptions between generations. Younger individuals, perceiving that older persons resent them, attempt to avoid interpersonal contact. (p. 108)

Kogan and Shelton also reported that their older subjects were concerned that they had feelings of being set apart, considered different, or rejected.

Aaronson (1966) administered the Gough Adjective Rating Scale to two groups of subjects in an attempt to identify some common behavior stereotypes associated with successive age levels from 5 to 85. His findings seemed to indicate that there are certain identifiable stereotypes of the ways people are perceived at various age levels. These stereotypes subdivide into three groups: childhood, adulthood, and senescence. Three factors were found that related to these groups: Mature restraint related to adulthood, asocial inefficiency overlaps childhood and senescence, and youthful exuberance related to childhood.

One hundred twenty subjects over 65 years of age were interviewed by Preston and Gudiksen (1966). The instrument used was a 110 item true and false questionnaire that was read to the subjects. Fifty-three of the statements in the test described potential satisfactions or gratifications and 57 described potential frustrations and disappointments. Subjects were also asked to indicate which of several adjective check list items were true or false for them and

for others their own age. Study data indicated that indigent older people chose more negative and fewer positive responses than middle or upper class subjects.

Silverman (1966) attempted to assess the validity of Kogan's (1961) Attitudes Toward Old People Scale. Silverman administered the Kogan scale to 89 undergraduate students and concluded that the scale was capable of predicting the disposition to associate with the aged in an actual situation.

An exploration of the reactions that children have toward the elderly (Hickey, Hickey, & Kalish, 1968) was conducted with a sample of third grade children. The children were asked to write an essay about an older person like their grandparents. The responses were grouped into two major categories: physical characteristics and social characteristics. The most common physical characteristics of older people that the children perceived as different were that older people were feeble and walked or moved about differently. In the social characteristics category, the children perceived the elderly as kind or friendly three times as often as mean or unfriendly.

Moburg (1969) used a list of 44 bi-polar words in combination with a Likert-type scale to study 60 ministers and 60 Rotarians' attitudes toward old people. Moburg's concept of an attitude was that an attitude was made up of three components: belief, feeling, and action. From

his research he suggested "that ministers evaluate old people negatively and as negatively as nonministers" (p. 224).

Other research results listed by Moburg were that no relationship was found between the clergy's attitude toward older people and their formal and clinical education or theological position.

Moburg's primary assumption, that ministers would share the negative attitude toward older people that prevails in our culture, was confirmed as a result of his data and its interpretation.

Weinberger and Millham (1975) administered attitude questionnaires and autobiographical sketches to a sample of college undergraduates in an effort to assess attitudes toward a representative 25-year-old and a representative 70-year-old. The elderly were rated in a more negative fashion when the attitude questionnaire was given. But when the autobiographical sketches were used, the students judged the 70-year-old more favorably than the 25-year-old. The researchers suggested that "there is a definite conflict between negative attitudes toward the group and a positive response tendency toward a personalized older person" (p. 348).

Kilty and Feld (1976) interviewed 471 subjects to investigate dimensionality of attitude or belief statements about aging and older people with two data sets. The first



set of 45 statements was directed at the characteristics, stereotypes, and common beliefs about aging and older people. The second set of 35 statements examined perceived needs, services, and concerns of older people. Statements in each data set were designed for response on a seven point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

By factor analyzing each set of data independently Kilty and Feld determined that the statements in each set broke into several factors. In the first data set that dealt with the 45 belief statements about older people, they found four separate factors. These were: positive reactions about old people, negative reactions about old people, alienation, and reactions toward the older worker.

The second data set of 35 statements was developed to study the dimensions of beliefs about the needs of older people. Factor analysis showed that the statements broke up into five separate factors: general entitlements for the older person, social rejection of older people, entitlement to remaining in the community, and reciprocity between the elderly and the community.

Kilty and Feld noted that the factor structure indicated little or no relationship between positive and negative items, as illustrated by the two factors reflecting positive and negative reactions about older people in the first data set. The two factors emerged from the research as statistically independent. This finding is significant

because it contrasts with other studies which viewed negative and positive beliefs as one belief. Kilty and Feld's research also resulted in a scale to be used to measure positive beliefs about the elderly and a separate scale to measure negative beliefs.

Attitudes of adolescents toward the elderly were studied by Ivester and King (1977). Kogan's scale was administered to 439 high school students. The researchers found that the majority of the adolescents in the study showed a positive attitude toward the aged. In justifying their findings, Ivester and King suggested that the young people in their study were from a rural area and may have had more frequent association with their grandparents than adolescents from an urban area who might be more likely to be far away from their grandparents. The results of the study also indicated that lower social class adolescents were less favorable toward the elderly than the upper social classes, although the lower social classes still reflected basically positive attitudes.

A study by Keith (1977) examined the relative effects of individual, client, and organizational characteristics on stereotypes of the aged held by 45 nursing home administrators. Clients with more desirable characteristics (e.g., maleness, mobility, and financial resources) received more positive evaluations from the people who cared for them. Keith thinks that older women have more negative

stereotypes associated with them than with any other age-sex group. He also suggested that direct contact work with the aged in institutions is associated with low status for the worker. Many of these workers tend to be nontrained women who have negative perceptions of the aged. Education and training for the workers was suggested as a way to create more favorable attitudes toward the aged.

An additional finding from the Weinberger and Millham study was that female subjects tended to be more extreme than males in their opinions of the elderly. Women rated the elderly as a group more negatively in personality than did male subjects. Women also judged the personalized older person as more intellectually capable, psychologically adjusted, and adaptable than did the male subjects.

Collette-Pratt (1976) investigated devaluation of old age in comparison to age in general. The subjects included three age groups: college students, middle-aged adults, and elderly adults. "Each group devalued old age in comparison to age in general, although young and middle-aged subjects devalued old age almost twice as much as the elderly subjects did (p. 197).

Collette-Pratt discussed the use of a semantic differential measurement technique involving seven point adjective pairs, but complete analysis of the research was difficult. It was mentioned that age in general was a mean score obtained by averaging each subject's attitudes

toward youth, middle age, and old age. The research findings also included the concept that for young and middle-aged subjects, negative attitudes toward death were significant predictors of devaluation of old age. For all three age groups a negative attitude toward poor health was the most consistent predictor of high devaluation of old age.

Ward (1977) interviewed 323 people who were at least 60 years of age. He investigated the impact of shifts in age identification by older people from middle-aged to elderly within the labeling theory of deviance. Age identification was not found to be related to attitudes toward old people, and the label of elderly did not affect self-esteem. The variable of age identification was measured by asking subjects if they thought of themselves as young, middle-aged, elderly, or old. The two most frequently selected choices were elderly and middle-aged.

Ward did find that attitudes toward older people were the best predictors of self-esteem for both males and females. The measure of attitudes toward older people was a group of 19 statements taken from the Tuckman and Lorge (1953) test. Determinants of self-esteem for males and females differed. Education and income were more important in determining male self-esteem, and current activities and the extent to which their aging had been accompanied by loss were more important for female self-esteem. Ward noted that:

This study did . . . find a strong and consistent relationship between acceptance of negative attitudes toward old people and self derogation. Linking such personal attitudes to societal stigmatization . . . these results indicate that stigmatization does have an important impact on the well-being of older people. (1977, p. 232)

Forty-seven reports of research on stereotypes of old age were analyzed by Brubaker and Powers (1976). They suggested that the literature has emphasized a negative stereotype of the elderly which may not be valid. The authors also questioned the validity of about 10 of these studies because the subjects were institutionalized older people. Brubaker and Powers think that the current negative stereotype, negative self-concept argument needs to be changed. They suggested a model that assumes the existence of a stereotype of old age that includes both negative and positive elements.

The research reviewed may not be directly comparable because theories of aging were not typically mentioned as a part of the authors' base of inquiry. In addition there were several research instruments used, and there were also different theoretical conceptions of how attitudes should be defined for study. Table 1 summarizes these instruments and concepts or definitions of attitude.

#### Knowledge About the Elderly

Research attempting to assess the knowledge of various groups about the elderly is very recent. A search of the

Table 1

Summary of Theoretical Conception and Form of  
Instruments Used in Attitude Research

Researchers & Year	Instrument		Theoretical Conception of an Attitude
	Form	Positive and Negative Items considered as one scale (if applicable)	(1) Attitude=one general concept
		Yes	No
			(3) Other
Tuckman & Lorge, 1953	Yes & No statements	X	(1)
Golde & Kogan, 1959	Sentence Completion		(3)
Kogan, 1961	Neg. & Pos. Statements	X	(1) Also examined cor- relates--anomie.
Kogan & Sheldon, 1962	Sentence Completion		(1)
Aaronson, 1966	Gough Adjec- tive Rating Scale		(3)
Preston & Gudiksen, 1966	True & False test; Adj. check list		(3)
Silverman, 1966	Kogans' OP Test & SD test	X	(1) In addition, action of the subjects was predicted.
Hickey, Hickey, & Kalish, 1968	Writing a paper		(1)
Moburg, 1969	40 bipolar adjectives		X (2)
Weinberger & Millham, 1975	Autobiog- raphies of old & young persons		X (3)

Table 1 Contd.

Researchers & Year	Instrument		Theoretical Conception of an Attitude
	Form	Positive and Negative Items considered as one scale (if applicable)	(1) Attitude=one general concept
		Yes	No
Collette- Pratte, 1976	7 point bipolar adj. pairs		(1)
Kilty & Feld, 1977	Statements rated on a 7 point scale		X (2)
Ivester & King, 1977	Kogan's test	X	(1)
Keith, 1977	Positive & Negative Items	X	(1) Also asked if attitude of subjects affected action toward elderly.
Ward, 1977	Tuckman & Lorge test	X	(1) Also examined self- esteem & age- identity of elderly subjects.

literature revealed one study and one instrument that had been developed to measure knowledge about older people. Erdman Palmore (1977) developed such an instrument and reported its use with undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty. He found that a sample of undergraduates got only two-thirds of the facts correct on the test, while graduate students scored 80% correct, and faculty scored 90% correct.

Palmore's instrument is made up of 25 statements designed to be answered true or false. The statements cover basic biological, emotional, and social facts and common misconceptions about aging. In the article accompanying the instrument, Palmore provides test answers and documents them with research evidence. He suggests a use of the test would be to measure the effects of lectures, courses, or other training experiences by comparing before and after scores.

### Research Related to the Church and the Elderly

#### Theoretical Perspectives

Developmental theory stresses the developmental stages and tasks of the individual from birth to death. Duvall (1977) suggested seven life stages, with aging as the final stage, and related ten developmental categories to these stages. For the aged individual, 15 developmental tasks were noted. All of these tasks could be considered important, but perhaps the most significant tasks for the elderly in relation to this study would be:



maintaining a sense of moral integrity in face of disappointments and disillusionments in life's hopes and dreams . . . . adapting interests and activities to reserves of vitality and energy of the aged body . . . . facing loss of one's spouse . . . . preparing for eventual and inevitable cessation of life by building a set of beliefs that one can live and die with in peace. (Duvall, 1977, pp. 172-175)

Another theorist, Erik Erikson (1963), formulated a developmental theory of personality that presents eight stages of ego development from infancy to old age with each stage involving a choice or crisis for the expanding ego. Stage eight of Erikson's theory is especially pertinent to this study. The choice or crisis to be resolved in stage eight (late adulthood) is "ego integrity vs. despair" (p. 87).

Although Erikson does not give a brief definition of ego identity, he did state that the constituents of ego integrity are:

ego's accrued assurance of its proclivity for order and meaning . . . . a post-narcissistic love of the human ego--not self--as an experience which conveys some world order and spiritual sense . . . . acceptance of one's one and only life cycle as something that had to be . . . . a comradeship with the ordering ways of distant times and different pursuits. (p. 87)

If the individual does not integrate his or her ego, despair is the result. Erikson (1963) noted that "Despair expresses the feeling that the time is now short, too short for the attempt to start another life" (p. 87).

Moburg and Gray (1977) suggested that the church, through the leadership of the clergy, contributes to the

adaptation of the elderly by alleviating anxieties concerning death, providing companionship, giving opportunities for participation in a group where the older person is welcome, assisting and adjustment to the death of loved ones, and furnishing comfort in times of discouragement and distress. These adjustments are closely related or identical to some of the developmental tasks that Duvall (1977) said must be dealt with during the individual's seventh life stage.

As Moburg and Gray (1977) noted, the clergy as the professional leaders of the church are instrumental in the contributions that the church can make to individual as well as family developmental task accomplishment.

Activity theory proposes that older people who age optimally are those persons who stay active and manage to resist the shrinkage of their social world (Havighurst, Neugarten, & Tobin, 1968). They maintain activities of middle age as long as possible and find substitutes for activities that must be relinquished.

Several writers (Ailor, 1973; Moburg & Gray, 1977; Robb, 1968) suggest that clergy as well as nonclergy in the church perceive older people's church affiliation from an activity perspective. Methodist minister James Ailor (1973) implied this view when he noted that the churches' role in providing for the elderly is not just perfunctorily to involve them in busy work but to help the elderly stay involved in the stream of life. Ailor said that this

involvement of the elderly is "the church in action calling the elderly to action" (p. 220).

Moburg and Gray (1977) studied case materials obtained in personal interviews from aging church members. As a result of their study these researchers stated that "the church provides its members with activities and opportunities to participate in a social environment in which the older person is welcome, which is not necessarily the case in other community institutions" (p. 120).

Moburg and Gray indicated that clergy and nonclergy within the church subscribed to activity theory because they provide the necessary structures for the elderly person's church activities.

Robb (1968) also supported activity theory when he suggested that the aged have much to offer the church. He noted that they can teach, assist in visitation, help maintain and improve property, do clerical work, handle church business affairs, and organize the staff programs for the aged.

### Role of the Clergy

Reisch (1967) considered how the clergy can help the elderly. He noted that when the elderly do seek counsel from ministers, the help that they receive will reflect the pastor's attitude toward the elderly and his understanding of what aging in our society means. He suggested that a pastor who has a positive attitude toward the elderly will

need to be knowledgeable about the resources in the community that may be helpful to older people.

From a national study of American Baptist clergy Longino and Kitson (1976) analyzed a portion of data that dealt with clergy role activities. They reported that ministers enjoyed contacts with their older church members. "While it is not the most enjoyable of their tasks, it is not among the least enjoyable either" (p. 344).

Longino and Kitson found that clergy with a more expressive orientation to their occupational roles derive greater satisfaction from ministering to the aged. The aged relate to the church in an expressive mode. This expressive orientation would appear to mean that they seek comfort, not challenge from the church. They also noted that churches are youth-oriented, and not elderly-oriented, partially because of the insistence of parents who want guidance for their children. These parents represent the persons in the church who provide the major share of financial and lay leadership support for the church, thus they have influence on what the minister does. Finally, Longino and Kitson concluded: "Clergy seem to share to some extent the ageist perspective prevalent in our society" (p. 344).

Moburg and Gray (1977) devoted a chapter of their book to the role of the clergy in relation to the elderly. They pointed out that "Through the roles of teaching,

preaching, pastoral care, and administrative leadership, the minister plays a primary part by providing services as well as by the stimulus given to ministries by other people of all ages" (p. 200).

Moburg and Gray also suggested that when ministers cope realistically with their own work role, future retirement and death, they are at the same time making themselves better prepared to minister to the aging.

#### Church Programs for the Elderly

Hammond (1969) said that the first step a local church should take regarding church programming for the elderly is to determine the number and location of older people in its purview. On the basis of this knowledge he suggested several types of involvement that the church might consider, such as: (1) hosting adult education courses, (2) setting up referral systems to direct older people to services, (3) using methods such as family nights to encourage multigenerational contact, (4) encouraging the minister to be the intermediary between generations, (5) counseling with dying persons, (6) having clergy minister to the dying aged by ministering to their family.

But Hammond noted that a church should be selective in the services it offers. He said that the following three questions should be asked:

1. Is this program commensurate with the church's tradition and theology? . . .

2. How effectively can the church conduct a given program? . . .
3. How effective is the church relative to other agencies in conducting a given program? (p. 309)

After considering several aspects of church programming Hammond noted that because regular religious services are open to persons of all ages the clergy feel that they are meeting the needs of the elderly. Hammond does not appear to agree, but he does concede that some positive changes in church programming for the elderly have occurred in recent years.

Cook (1976) made available a comprehensive report on a survey of programs for the aging that were related to religious institutions. This was a national survey, and characteristics of programs at various levels of operation are listed and described. One of the most valuable segments of information may be the table that rank orders the 12 most frequently occurring services for the elderly by level of operation (national, regional, area, local). At the local level the 12 most frequently occurring programs were (in rank order):

1. Fellowship/Social activities
2. Congregational & Pastoral Ministry to elderly
3. Visiting/Companionship
4. Recreational activities
5. Educational Services to older adults
6. Communication (information dissemination, etc.)

7. Counseling (Pastoral and other for the elderly)
8. Nutrition--meals in group settings
9. Transportation for necessities and business
10. Referral Service for securing needed services
11. Arts and Crafts programs
12. Volunteer program involving elderly (p. 84).

The report also said that at the national level programs tend to serve denominational or organizational needs. Regional level programs are described as tending to revolve around brick and mortar and trained staff. The area level programs tend to be involved with activities such as nutrition, transportation, and social activities. The area level programs often receive federal and state funding. Local programs tend to operate under a congregational auspice with the pastor the person responsible. Most local programs reported one funding source, usually the church budget or contributions.

It would appear that the elderly are beginning to experience some change in the religious community as the Cook report documents. The issue of the relationship of the clergy's attitude toward the elderly and church programming would still appear to be of concern.

This researcher (Youngman, 1975) investigated the religious education programs available to persons 65 years old and older in churches in Albion, Michigan. Eighteen church leaders were personally interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule. Programs were classified as

instrumental or expressive. Instrumental programs were designated as activities that have a goal outside and beyond the educational program and have the potential for changing the learners' situation. Expressive programs were considered to be those activities that have gratification within the learning situation itself. Numbers of programs of each type were designated. Elderly participants in religious education were considered in relation to program participation, age range, and other variables.

Data collected from interviews with these 18 church leaders provided the basis for the following statements about the elderly in Albion churches and the religious education programs available to the elderly: (1) Sixteen percent of the combined church membership of the 18 churches were 65 years old or older; (2) nearly 4% of the elderly church members were living in institutions; (3) expressive education programs outnumbered instrumental programs; (4) programs available only to the elderly represented one-fifth of the total programs available to all adults; (5) programs available only to the elderly were more likely to be expressive than instrumental; (6) the church in the study with the largest number of elderly people offered the most programs for the elderly, but this was not indicative of a trend throughout the study; (7) there were more elderly females than males in the study. Females made up 63.9% of the elderly church population studied; (8) instrumental



programs tended to deal more with personal needs and family relationship areas than with financial matters, health concerns or continued work opportunities; and (9) an estimated 78.8% of Albion's elderly participated in religious education programs in 1975.

This study of religious education programs available to elderly persons in Albion, Michigan pointed up the need to determine clergy and nonclergy's knowledge and beliefs about older people. These knowledge and belief factors were seen as possible determinants of the effectiveness of church programs for the elderly.

### Summary

Research literature reviewed in this study was categorized under two general headings: research related to the elderly and research related to the church and the elderly. In the first category studies were considered that investigated attitudes and knowledge about older people. Studies in the second group considered the role of the church in relation to older people and church programs.

Attitudes toward the elderly have been widely investigated, but the instruments used and the theoretical orientation of the researchers have varied. Table 1 shows this variation. Three studies (Kilty & Feld, 1977; Moburg, 1969; Weinberger & Milham, 1975) used instruments that

measured positive beliefs and negative beliefs as separate belief sets, which was also the perspective of this study. Two of the three studies (Kilty & Feld, 1977; Moburg, 1969) used instruments based on another of the concepts employed in this study, i.e., that attitudes are made up of belief, feeling, and acting components. In comparing the two research instruments, the Kilty and Feld instrument that had been factor analyzed by those researchers was chosen as the best measure of coexistent negative and positive beliefs for this study.

Attitude researchers have reported several findings about attitudes toward the elderly. They have suggested that children believe that old people are feeble but kindly. High school students were reported to have demonstrated positive attitudes toward the aged. Investigators found that undergraduates demonstrated a more negative attitude toward the elderly as a group than toward an individual elderly person, but other researchers reported that undergraduates attempted to avoid contact with older people. Middle-aged subjects were reported to devalue old age almost twice as much as elderly subjects did. Investigators revealed that older people who had negative attitudes toward elderly people were found to be self derogatory. Finally, one researcher reported that clergy evaluate older people negatively and as negatively as did nonministers in his study.

In general, research reporting attitudes toward older people tended to report the existence of both negative and positive attitudes.

Knowledge about the elderly has been less widely studied than attitudes. One study was found that had investigated the extent of subject's knowledge about older people. In this pioneer study Erdman Palmore (1977) also reported on an instrument that he developed and used to measure individual's knowledge about elderly people. Palmore suggested the instrument as being useful for evaluating the effectiveness of planned learning experiences.

Research literature concerning the role of the clergy revealed one study that found that ministers enjoy their contacts with older church members, although the researchers commented that the clergy share to some extent the ageist perspective of the society. Theoretical articles about the role of the clergy suggested a positive supportive ministerial role as necessary in ministering to the elderly.

Church programming for the elderly appears to be experiencing some change as reports such as Cook's (1976) show, but programs for the elderly were reported to be generally in the early stages of development. The Youngman (1975) survey supported this idea for one local area in Michigan, and led to the development of the hypotheses tested in the current study.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE

The purpose of this study was to measure clergy and nonclergy's beliefs and knowledge about older people before and after a planned learning experience. The procedures used to carry out this purpose are described in this chapter under the following headings: research design; nature and design of the planned learning experience; selection and description of the instruments; selection and description of the subjects; administration of tests; and data analysis.

#### Research Design

The type of research employed in this study was a survey design. Instruments that measured subjects' negative and positive beliefs toward aging and level of knowledge about aging were administered twice to two groups (clergy and nonclergy). The independent variable was a one-day planned learning experience provided by the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging. The dependent variables were the clergy and nonclergy's beliefs and level of knowledge about aging before and after the planned learning experience.

The short interval between the pretest and posttest was planned to reduce the possibility of extraneous variables

altering the posttest results. In addition, the adult subjects' beliefs and knowledge (dependent variables) were assumed to be reasonably stable, and unlikely to change unless some significant effort was made to change them. This stability of the dependent variables and the short interval between the pretest and posttest contribute to the validity of the research design.

#### Nature and Design of the Planned Learning Experience

Both of the one-day planned learning experiences were held in colleges: Roscommon and Petoskey. One classroom was used at each location. In each case the classroom size was adequate for easy discussion without being crowded. The entire day was spent in the college facilities with lunch provided in the schools' cafeterias.

The same Task Force members conducted both of the PLE's. There were two men and two women members. One of the men was OSA's Task Force Director, and he assumed primary responsibility for the leadership of the learning experiences. The other man was a Presbyterian minister. One of the women was a Catholic nun, and the other was an Episcopalian lay person with expertise in directing PLE's in her denomination.

The morning's program dealt with two major topics (see Appendix B for Agenda): "Becoming Aware of the Aging Process" and "Realities of Aging." During the first segment

the film, "Peege," was shown. The film portrays the interaction between an elderly woman in a nursing home and her family who come to visit her. PLE participants were encouraged to consider whether their personal attitudes toward older people were displayed by the film family. Discussion questions for "Peege" were distributed prior to viewing the film and time was allotted for discussion after viewing. Social concepts of aging was the primary focus of this portion of the program. During the "Realities of Aging" segment the leader of the PLE attempted to induce the group to imagine what old age was like. He had participants close their eyes and then he described various situations that are very real to older people. This technique permitted PLE participants to consider social, biological, and emotional aspects of aging. Social aspects included a consideration of what it would be like to be retired and how retirement would affect finances, friendships, and family relations. Biological aspects of aging included consideration of the changes that may occur in the individual's body as aging progresses. Emotional aspects of aging dealt with how an older person might feel about these changing social and biological conditions, and how they may adapt their lifestyle to accommodate the changes. Next, a slide show depicting some of the biological realities of aging was presented. This included what happens when the ability to see is diminished, and provided other descriptions of

diminished physical abilities due to aging. The slide show was followed by a talk by the PLE leader on some concerns of Michigan's older population. This speech dealt with information that OSA had gathered in a survey of 3,000 older people in Michigan in 1974, as well as additional more current data. The 1974 survey data are available in a document entitled, Michigan's Aging Citizens: Characteristics, Opinions and Service Utilization Patterns. The PLE leader's speech dealt with all of the concepts of aging noted in the definition of a PLE: educational, social, spiritual, biological, and emotional. For example, the spiritual concept included information from the OSA survey that indicated that aside from spouse or children, the first person to be called upon by older people during a crisis is a professional religious leader. Further consideration was given to the spiritual concept as suggestions for meeting the spiritual needs of older persons were given. During the speech demographic data relating to the concepts were considered, for example, it was noted in relation to the social concept that the majority of older people have incomes above the poverty level as defined by the Federal government. The morning learning session closed with a group discussion about the realities of aging.

The afternoon program considered two major topics: "Aging and the Religious Community" and "Program-Building in Your Community." The four PLE presenters held a panel

discussion on "Personal/Professional Attitudes." This segment of the program emphasized the social concept of aging, with a focus on attitudes toward the elderly. Panel members mentioned their personal attitudes toward the elderly as well as how clergy and lay leaders' attitudes affect program building for the elderly. Panel members responded to comments from PLE participants during this presentation. Next, the Presbyterian minister delivered a speech entitled "Ministry with Seniors--Revisiting Yesterday for Tomorrow's Journey." In the speech he considered how older people can gain strength for present and future stresses by being aware of having survived past difficulties. Social, emotional, biological, and spiritual concepts of aging were addressed in the speech. A reaction time followed.

After a brief coffee break the final segment of the PLE program was begun with consideration of the topic of "Program Building." This segment had a heavy emphasis on the educational and spiritual concepts of aging. The PLE leader led into a consideration of these concepts and his stated topic with a talk about "How Seniors View the Religious Community." He pointed out some expectations the elderly have about the church and how church programs can address some of these expectations. This was followed by all PLE presenters sharing information with the group about how to get help with program building (educational concept). The leaders also mentioned their favorite resources on aging,



such as particular books or films. Reprints of journal and book articles that had been given to all PLE participants (Appendix B) were mentioned by the PLE leader as recommended reading. During the last of the Program Building segment each of the PLE presenters spoke briefly to the group about their program building ideas. These ideas could be considered as educational concepts related to meeting the various needs of the elderly. Some emphasis was given to the spiritual needs. After these talks, the total group was divided into four small groups with a PLE presenter serving as a moderator in each group. These moderators encouraged group members to decide what their first step would be in starting or improving their work with older people. These program building ideas were shared with the small group and later with the total group. This sharing, which focused on educational and spiritual concepts, also dealt with biological, emotional, and social concepts of aging as program ideas were considered to meet needs that were biological, social, or emotional in nature. The sharing concluded the last topic considered in the program.

### Selection and Description of the Instruments

#### Selection

As reported in the review of literature, no research has been done that measures the clergy's knowledge of the elderly. No standardized tests were available, and Palmore's

(1977) test had not been used with the clergy. Palmore (Note 3) suggested a slightly updated version of the originally published test would be appropriate for use with clergy as well as nonclergy. This updated version was used in the study with no modification.

Reviewing research dealing with clergy's attitudes toward the elderly revealed some studies, but these studies tended to use tests that measured the entire attitude constellation of beliefs, feelings, and action. They also often assumed that a person's negative and positive beliefs about the elderly could be added together to produce a measure of how negative or positive the person's attitude was toward older people. Kilty and Feld (1976) factor analyzed several attitude tests. From their research they suggested questions that would measure negative beliefs and positive beliefs as two separate belief systems. Feelings and actions were not measured. Because this test appeared to be more consistent with the theory of attitude constellation proposed by Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachey (1962) the Kilty and Feld instrument was selected for use in the study. The researcher used the original test items suggested by Kilty.

While the researcher was selecting instruments and developing her study, reports (Baldus, 1976a, 1976b) were read about "Workshops for Religious Leadership on Aging" that were being conducted by the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging's (OSA's) Ecumenical Interfaith Task Force on

Ministry and Aging. After several conferences with OSA's Program Analyst/PLE leader, Benjamin Baldus, it was determined that these planned learning experiences could provide an opportunity to study clergy and nonclergy's beliefs and knowledge before and after a planned learning experience. The researcher then presented plans for her study to the Ecumenical Task Force on Ministry and Aging. After the Task Force reviewed the two instruments to be used in the study (Kilty and Feld's Elderly Attitude Survey & Palmore's Facts on Aging Quiz) permission was given to the researcher to administer these tests at OSA Task Force sponsored planned learning experiences.

The tests were pilot tested at a PLE held in Big Rapids, Michigan during the winter of 1978. This early trial testing provided information about the use of the questionnaires. For example, subjects suggested double spacing between test items for easy reading. They also thought that the administrator of the instruments should read the questionnaire's directions aloud with the subjects before testing began, and provide time for inquiries about the questionnaires before beginning testing. It was also decided that the researcher and PLE leaders should have the subjects hand them the completed questionnaires, and the questionnaires would then be quickly checked to determine if all test items were answered before the subjects left the classroom.

Kilty and Feld's Elderly  
Attitude Survey

This test measures beliefs held about the elderly and also provides a general measure of alienation beliefs of the subjects. It consists of 35 statements that measure beliefs toward the elderly and 10 statements that measure alienation beliefs.

Kilty and Feld (1976) developed their instrument to explore the underlying dimensionality of beliefs about aging. They questioned whether it was appropriate to assume that total test scores derived from the use of various belief statements could measure a complete attitude toward the elderly. An assumption had been made in the design of earlier instruments (Kogan, 1961; Tuckman & Lorge, 1952, 1953) with reference to this unidimensionality. But Kilty and Feld thought that it was more likely that these tests were measuring different beliefs and that total test scores could not be accurately portrayed as assessing one complete attitude toward the elderly.

In an attempt to provide better measures of attitudes toward the elderly, Kilty and Feld factor analyzed 35 belief statements taken from the tests of Kogan and Tuckman and Lorge. These were "items that are commonly found in attitude scales about aging" (p. 592).

Sroles' (1956) alienation measure was also included, and Kilty and Feld developed five new alienation belief

statements. The total items in the Kilty and Feld instrument numbered 45.

From their analysis of data collected from 471 subjects (290 nonelderly and 181 elderly), Kilty and Feld (1976) concluded that the test statements broke into four principal factors that represented four distinct beliefs about older people. These factors are: older worker, alienation, positive beliefs, negative beliefs. The researchers suggested that the statements that make up these four factors comprise four separate scales. Because of the assumed separateness of these factors, it was considered valid to analyze only those statements related to this study's research question, which was the negative belief factor and the positive belief factor.

In a telephone conversation, Kilty (Note 1) suggested that statements that loaded .40 or above (in the varimax rotated factor matrix) on the belief factors would be valid statements for measuring each of these beliefs. This researcher accepted Kilty's suggestion and did not analyze three positive belief statements and one negative belief statement from the total of 13 positive beliefs and 8 negative belief statements.

Because of the factor analysis done by Kilty and Feld, it appears that the separate scales are more valid measures of beliefs than earlier measures of global attitudes toward older people. This test is also more consistent with the

theoretical orientation of Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachey (1962) who stated that attitudes have three components, one of which is the evaluative beliefs.

After administration of the negative belief scale and the positive belief scale in this study the test-retest method of estimating the reliability of these instruments' scores yielded a reliability coefficient of .96 for the negative belief scale scores and .93 for the positive belief scale scores. As Gronlund (1965) suggests the size of the reliability coefficient is related to the method of estimation, and the test-retest method may yield a higher reliability coefficient if the time interval between tests is short, and "become lower as time interval between tests is increased" (p. 94). The short time interval between tests (7-8 hours) in this study should be considered in relation to the relatively high reliability coefficients of the negative and positive belief scores.

#### Erdman Palmore's Facts on Aging Quiz

Palmore's Facts on Aging Quiz was administered as a measure of subjects' knowledge about older people before and after a planned learning experience.

Palmore (1977) suggested the appropriateness of his test for this purpose when he stated that the instrument could be used "to measure the effects of courses or training materials or to measure changes in information" (p. 320).

The test contains 25 true and false items that measure knowledge about persons 65 years old or older. Each item is documented with research evidence. Palmore noted that test items are "designed to cover the basic physical, mental, and social facts and most common misconceptions about aging" (p. 315).

Palmore tested three groups using his instrument. He reported the following information about scores:

Facts on Aging Scores for Undergraduates,  
Graduates, and Faculty

Group	N	Mean % Right	Standard Deviation
Undergraduate students	87	65	11.2
Graduate Students	44	80	7.5
Faculty	11	90	7.7

Source: Palmore, 1977, p. 318.

Palmore suggested that the difference shown between the mean percent correct of different groups support the validity of the test. That is, scores increased with the educational level of the subjects. A study conducted about the same time as this study and published in 1979 (Holtszman & Beck) also found that better educated groups scored higher on the Palmore quiz.

Administration of the Palmore instrument in this study produced data that was in agreement with Palmore's findings. As indicated in Table 2, the items with the lowest percentage

Table 2

Comparison of Five Group's Mean Error Scores on  
Statements in Palmore's Test of Knowledge  
About Older People

Statement	Youngman Study (Pretest)		Palmore's (1977) Study		
	Clergy	Nonclergy	Undergraduate	Graduate	Faculty
1	0	0	7	0	0
2	65.4	52.6	40	14	27
3	7.7	5.3	16	2	0
4	30.8	28.9	21	16	9
5	3.8	0	12	0	0
6	11.5	7.9	2	7	0
7	73.1	63.2	74	27	0
8	11.5	31.6	40	27	18
9	15.4	18.4	37	2	0
10	3.8	2.6	9	0	0
11	7.7	28.9	47	9	0
12	65.4	47.4	47	30	9
13	0	2.6	5	0	0
14	3.8	15.8	7	7	0
15	3.8	15.8	9	2	0
16	46.2	42.1	74	73	55
17	26.9	39.5	42	16	0
18	11.5	28.9	42	18	0
19	96.2	86.8	86	55	36
20	69.2	50.0	56	9	9
21	69.2	58.4	74	50	45
22	30.8	18.4	2	11	36
23	65.4	65.8	63	44	18
24	61.4	55.3	58	73	0
25	57.7	42.1	21	18	18



of error in both studies were statements 1 and 13. The item with the highest mean error score for the two studies was statement 19. This is another indication of agreement between the findings of the Palmore and Youngman studies.

Since the researcher could not find reports related to the use of the Facts on Aging Quiz, it was necessary to place a telephone call to Palmore. In this conversation he said that Levenson (Palmore, Notes 3 and 4) had administered the Palmore test to the same 30 undergraduate students in September and December of 1977. Levenson reported a mean of 61.2% and a standard deviation of 10.13 for the September test and a mean of 61.2% with a standard deviation of 9.94 for the December test. Levenson said "Neither of these means were significantly different from the mean undergraduate score that you [Palmore] reported in the original article" (Palmore, Note 4).

Palmore (Note 4) indicated that five other researchers were in the process of conducting studies using his test. It is apparent that Palmore's instrument has generated interest from persons concerned with knowledge about aging.

Because of the documentation of the test items, the supporting research of Levenson, and the demonstrated differences in mean scores of undergraduates, graduates, and faculty, Palmore's test was judged by the researcher as the most appropriate instrument available for assessing persons' knowledge about older people before and after one planned learning experience.

A reliability study using the rank-difference correlation (test and retest method) to express the degree of relationship between the Facts on Aging Quiz pretest and posttest scores in this study yielded a reliability coefficient of .99. This coefficient could be inflated because the interval of time between tests was short.

Palmore (1976) stated that the primary purpose of his quiz was edumetric, that is, it was designed to be viewed as a whole.

#### Selection and Description of Subjects

The sample was a non-random purposive one that met the requirements of the study, which was to remeasure beliefs and knowledge of clergy and nonclergy about the elderly and evaluate the effect of one planned learning experience on these persons' beliefs and knowledge about older people.

The 64 subjects in the sample were participants in one of two "Workshops for Professional and Lay Religious Leaders." These one-day PLE's which were held at Petoskey as Roscommon, Michigan in April, 1978, were sponsored by the Michigan Offices of Services to the Aging (OSA). Leadership for the PLE's was provided by OSA's Program Analyst for Religious Affairs and OSA's Ecumenical Interfaith Task Force on Ministry and Aging.

To secure PLE participants, OSA's Ecumenical Interfaith Task Force on Ministry and Aging mailed 331 letters

(see Appendix B) to clergy in a number of different denominations. Clergy and their key lay people from 21 counties in northern lower Michigan were invited to participate in the PLE's. The list of clergy to whom letters were sent had been compiled by the Task Force utilizing telephone directory listings, information furnished by denomination leaders, and through use of information available to individual task force members.

Follow-up brochures (Appendix B) briefly describing the PLE's and containing a reservation form for themselves and their key lay people were also mailed to the clergy.

Further follow-up contact with the clergy was provided by a task force member and local area committee. In addition to promoting PLE attendance, they accepted reservations and coordinated local arrangements for the PLE's.

### Clergy

There were 26 clergy in the sample. Eight represented Catholic churches, one a Catholic retirees' club, and the remaining 17 represented 8 different protestant denominations. The protestant denominations represented were: Church of God, Congregationalist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Mennonite, Reformed, United Methodist, and United Presbyterian.

The group had 6 women and 20 men. Four of the women were Catholic nuns, one was a Lutheran sister, and one was a Church of God minister. Table 3 describes the clergy's religious affiliation.

Table 3  
Religious Affiliation of Clergy

Affiliation	Men N	Women N
Catholic churches	4	4
Catholic Retirees' Club	1	
Protestant churches:		
Church of God	2	1
Congregationalist	1	
Episcopal	3	
Lutheran	3	1
Mennonite	1	
Reformed	1	
United Methodist	3	
United Presbyterian	1	

There were equal numbers of clergy at each of the two PLE's (Petoskey and Roscommon); or 13 at each meeting. It was of interest that there were more Catholic leaders at the Roscommon meeting. Eight Catholic leaders participated in Roscommon, and one Catholic church was represented by clergy at the Petoskey PLE. Table 4 reports the number of clergy participating in each PLE and indicates whether they were protestant or Catholic.

Table 4

Clergy's PLE Participation  
and Religious Affiliation

Workshop	Total Participants N	Protestants N	Catholic N
Petoskey	13	12	1
Roscommon	13	5	8

Twenty-two of the 26 clergy had attended graduate school and/or seminary. Three had completed college but had not done graduate work. One was a high school graduate only. The person with the least education was female. Table 5 reports the educational attainment of the clergy.

Table 5

Education of Clergy

	High School N	College N	Graduate School and/or Seminary N
Women	1	1	4
Men	0	2	18

Ages of the clergy varied from 25 to 76 with one person not divulging his age. Mean age of the 25 clergy was 46 years. The six women's mean age was 46.4 with the range varying from 27 to 66. The mean age of the 20 men was 45.8 with an age range of 25 to 76. Of the clergy, 2

were in their twenties, 4 were in their thirties, 12 were in their forties, 4 were in their fifties, 2 were in their sixties, and one was 76. As noted in Table 6, the forties group was the largest with 46.1% of the total.

Table 6  
Ages of Clergy

	Age	Number	Percent of Group	Age Mean of Group
Women:	27	1	16.4	
	41-48	3	50.0	
	54	1	16.4	
	60	1	16.4	46.4
Men:	25	1	6	
	33-37	4	20	
	40-48	9	45	
	53-54	3	15	
	60	1	5	
	76	1	5	
	Unknown	1	5	45.8
All Clergy:	25-27	2	7.6	
	33-37	4	15.2	
	40-49	12	46.1	
	53-54	4	15.2	
	60	2	7.6	
	76	1	3.8	
	Unknown	1	3.8	46.0

### Nonclergy

There were 38 nonclergy in the sample, 8 men, and 30 women. Of them, 19 represented Catholic churches, 2 listed

affiliations with regional aging centers, 13 represented protestant churches, and 4 did not disclose an affiliation with any organization. Protestant denominations represented were: Baptist, Church of Christ, Church of God, Church of the Brethren, Episcopal, Lutheran, Mennonite, and United Methodist. Table 7 shows religious affiliation of the non-clergy by denomination.

Table 7  
Religious Affiliation of Nonclergy

Affiliation	Men N	Women N
Catholic churches	5	14
Protestant churches		
Baptist		1
Church of the Brethren		1
Church of God		1
Episcopal		2
Lutheran		1
Mennonite		1
United Church of Christ		1
United Methodist	2	3
Agencies--not church related	1	1
Unknown		4

There were 13 nonclergy present at the Petoskey PLE and 25 nonclergy at the Roscommon meeting. The two PLE groups were very similar, except that, like the clergy at

the Roscommon meeting, the nonclergy at Roscommon were more apt to be affiliated with the Catholic church. Table 8 reports the number of nonclergy participating in each PLE and their religious affiliation.

Table 8  
Nonclergy's PLE Participation and  
Religious Affiliation

PLE	Total Participants N	Protestant N	Catholic N	Unknown* N
Petoskey	13	7	5	1
Roscommon	25	6	14	5

\*Includes 2 subjects who designated only agency affiliation.

The nonclergy had less formal education than did the clergy. The nonclergy's range was from eighth grade (one male subject) to graduate school and/or seminary (four subjects). The clergy's range was high school (one subject) to graduate and/or seminary (22 subjects). Table 9 compares the educational attainments of the two groups.

Most of the nonclergy indicated high school as the extent of their formal education. Nine (23.6%) nonclergy indicated college attendance. One nonclergy did not note educational level.



Table 9

## Comparison of Clergy and Nonclergy's Education

	8th Grade	High School	College	Graduate School and/or Seminary
Nonclergy	1	23	9	4
Clergy	0	1	3	22

Nonclergy's age range was from 28 to 77, with one person not divulging her age. Mean age of the nonclergy was 54. One was 28, 7 were in their thirties, 4 were in their forties, 9 were in their fifties, 14 were in their sixties, and 2 were in their seventies. Table 10 shows ages of the nonclergy.

Administration of Tests

During the OSA PLE registration period, each subject was given a packet of materials. The packet contained reprints of pertinent articles, a resource list, an agenda, and Questionnaire One and Two. These questionnaires (Appendix A) each contained the Kilty and Feld (1976) and the Palmore test (1977). The pretest (Questionnaire One) contained an additional sheet that asked for demographic data such as age, sex, occupation, and education. The pretest and posttest were otherwise the same except that the Palmore test had been randomly reordered for the posttest. Tests for each individual were

Table 10  
Ages of Nonclergy

	Age	Number	Percent of Group	Age Mean of Group
<b>Women :</b>				
	28	1	3	
	30-37	5	17	
	43-49	4	13	
	53-59	8	27	
	60-69	10	33	
	71	1	3	
	Unknown	1	3	
				53.0
<b>Men :</b>				
	33-35	2	25	
	57	1	12.5	
	62-63	4	50	
	77	1	12.5	
				56.3
<b>All Nonclergy:</b>				
	28	1	2.6	
	30-37	7	18.4	
	43-49	4	10.5	
	53-59	9	23.6	
	60-69	14	36.8	
	71-77	2	5.2	
	Unknown	1	2.6	
				53.7

coded so that each subject's pretest and posttest could be identified.

PLE participants were asked to refrain from discussing the questionnaires during the refreshment time. Following refreshments, subjects were seated in a classroom. After a short speech by the PLE leader, the first questionnaire (pretest) was administered. Before beginning the tests, the PLE leader told the subjects the purpose of the questionnaires and encouraged them to answer all questions. Directions for the questionnaire were read, and time was allowed for questions regarding ways to respond to the test items. All questionnaires were collected before proceeding with the showing of the film, "Peege."

The last item on the day's agenda for both of the PLE's was completing Questionnaire Two (posttest). Again group cooperation was asked in completely filling out the questionnaire and questions about the test instructions were solicited. A request was made that group members complete the questionnaire and turn it in before they left the meeting. Questionnaires were collected at the door as participants left.

PLE participants were very cooperative and friendly, and several expressed interest in obtaining more information about the questionnaires. One couple arrived late at the Roscommon meeting and did not want to fill out the two questionnaires. They could not be included in the sample.

### Data Analysis

Scoring techniques for the three data collection measures used in the study, and a description of other data analysis methods are presented here.

#### Kilty and Feld's Elderly Attitude Survey: Negative Beliefs

The negative belief test consisted of seven items that the clergy and nonclergy could respond to on a seven-point scale ranging from strongly agree (1 point value) to strongly disagree (7 points value). Each subject had a potential score of 7 to 49 points. A high score on an item, a test, a group of tests, or a high mean score of a group of tests indicates a less negative opinion about older people. Conversely, a low score on the negative items, tests, or mean scores of tests indicates more negative beliefs about the elderly.

In order to test a hypothesis, each subject's negative belief score was calculated by adding the values for each of the items together and dividing by the number of statements. Individual scores were then added together and divided by the appropriate number representing the number of subjects in the clergy and/or nonclergy group.

#### Kilty and Feld's Elderly Attitude Survey: Positive Beliefs

Clergy and nonclergy's positive beliefs about the elderly pretest and posttest scores were calculated using

information from the 10 item positive belief test. Individual subjects could score from 10 to 70 total points. Item scores range from 1 to 7. High item or total scores indicate disagreement with the positive statements presented regarding the elderly. For example, an item score of 7 would designate strong disagreement with a positive statement such as: Older people make friends easily. High scores denote a less positive belief about older people than do lower scores.

Points on the 10 positive belief items were totalled and divided by ten to determine individual scores. These scores were then added together and divided by the number of group subjects to determine sample mean scores. The same scoring procedure was used for both the pretest and posttest.

#### Palmore's Knowledge of Aging Quiz

A 25 statement true and false test was used to determine clergy and nonclergy's level of knowledge about older people and the aging process. The tests were used as a pretest and posttest. Posttest items were randomly reordered.

When test results were tabulated, each correct answer was assigned a value of one point and incorrect answers were given a point value of 0. In the pretest form of the test included in Appendix A the odd numbered items were considered false and the even numbered items were considered

true. Possible scores on an individual test could range from 0 to 25. Subject's individual and group pretest and posttest scores were tabulated, and group means determined.

Data from the three measurements were transferred to data processing cards. The Control Data Corporation 6500 model computer at Michigan State University was used to perform the analysis. Programs used to compute the statistics in this study are a part of the 7.0 version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie et al., 1977). Table 11 shows further methods used to analyze the data.

Table 11  
Methods Used to Analyze Data

Reason for Analysis	Data Used in Analysis	Statistic Used
<u>Test of Hypotheses</u>		
1	Pretest data for all subjects using Kilty & Feld instrument. Negative belief scale	
2	All subjects pretest data using Kilty & Feld instrument. Positive belief scale.	
3	Clergy's pretest & posttest data from negative belief scale of Kilty & Feld test.	
4	Nonclergy's pretest & posttest data from negative belief scale of Kilty & Feld.	<u>t</u> -test
5	Clergy's pretest & posttest data from positive belief scale of Kilty & Feld test.	
6	Nonclergy's pretest & posttest data from positive belief scale of Kilty & Feld test.	
7	Clergy's pretest and posttest scores on Palmore's test.	
8	Nonclergy's pretest and posttest scores on Palmore's test.	
<u>Description of Clergy &amp; Nonclergy by:</u>		
Age, sex, education, church affiliation & workshop group	Demographic Data	Frequency Count

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results in relation to each of the eight hypotheses. Scores on individual items of the three instruments utilized are also presented.

Findings represent data about hypotheses in three categories: negative beliefs, positive beliefs, and knowledge.

Hypothesis 1: Prior to participation in a planned learning experience there are no significant differences between clergy and nonclergy's negative beliefs about the elderly.

Group pretest scores on the negative belief measure were used to tabulate mean scores for the clergy and nonclergy. As Table 12 shows, the clergy had a slightly higher mean score than the nonclergy. This indicated that the clergy tended to disagree with the negative statements more than did the nonclergy. Or stated another way, before the planned learning experience the clergy held slightly less negative beliefs about the elderly than the nonclergy did.

Application of the t-test revealed that the two-tailed probability score was .481 with 56.6 degrees of freedom. This probability figure indicated no significant statistical difference between the mean scores of the clergy as a group and the nonclergy. Hypothesis one, which



stated that prior to participation in a planned learning experience there would be no significant difference between clergy and nonclergy's negative beliefs about the elderly, was supported.

There was a trend indicated by the mean scores of the two groups. This trend was that when clergy and nonclergy's negative beliefs about old people were assessed before the learning experience, the clergy tended to hold slightly less negative beliefs.

Table 12

Clergy and Nonclergy's Mean Scores on Kilty  
and Feld's Negative Belief Pretest

Variable	N	Mean	T Value	Level of Sig.
Neg. Belief (Pretest)				
Nonclergy	38	3.113	-.74	.461
Clergy	26	3.291		

Hypothesis 2: Prior to participation in a planned learning experience there are no significant differences between clergy and nonclergy's positive beliefs about the elderly.

Pretest scores were calculated using the information from the 10 item positive belief test devised by Kilty and

Feld (1976). As Table 13 indicates, the pretest mean score for the clergy as a group was slightly higher (less positive) than the pretest nonclergy mean score.

Table 13  
Clergy and Nonclergy's Mean Scores on Kilty  
and Feld's Positive Belief Pretest

Variable	N	Mean	T Value	Level of Sig.
Pos. Belief (Pretest)				
Nonclergy	38	2.779	-1.38	.174
Clergy	26	3.035		

Although the clergy's mean score indicated a less positive belief about old people as compared to the non-clergy's mean score, the t-test analysis showed no significant difference. Two-tailed probability was .174 with 55 degrees of freedom. Hypothesis two was accepted.

Hypothesis 3: The clergy's negative beliefs about the elderly will not differ significantly before and after one planned learning experience.

Table 14 indicates that the clergy's mean score increased from the pretest to the posttest. Although the difference between the pretest mean scores and posttest mean scores was not statistically significant, there was a

trend toward less negative beliefs about the elderly after the PLE.

Table 14  
Clergy's Mean Scores of Negative  
Beliefs About Older People

Variable	N	Mean	T Value	Level of Sig.
Negative Belief				
Pretest	26	3.291	-1.32	.199
Posttest	26	3.516		

Application of the t-test for dependent samples indicated a two-tailed probability of .199 with 25 degrees of freedom. The hypothesis that clergy's negative beliefs about the elderly would not differ significantly before and after one planned learning experience was supported.

Hypothesis 4: The nonclergy's negative beliefs about the elderly will not differ significantly before and after one planned learning experience.

There was a tendency toward increased nonclergy negative beliefs about the elderly after the workshop. As shown in Table 15, the tendency was not statistically significant.

Table 15  
Nonclergy's Mean Scores of Negative  
Beliefs About Old People

Variable	N	Mean	Value	Level of Sig.
Neg. Belief				
Pretest	36 *(38)	3.097	.97	.340
Posttest	36 *(38)	2.982		

\*Data from 2 subjects was not analyzed because they did not answer two negative belief statements.

The t-test results indicated a probability score of .430 with 35 degrees of freedom. Hypothesis 4 was supported.

Considering the pretest and posttest mean score for the total sample (clergy and nonclergy) on the negative belief scale, the combined group did not significantly change their negative beliefs about the elderly after one planned learning experience. However, the mean scores did increase slightly indicating that negative beliefs held by the group toward older people declined after the planned learning experience. In other words, as a group the non-clergy and clergy had less negative beliefs about the elderly after the PLE (see Table 16).

Table 16

Clergy and Nonclergy's Mean Scores of Negative  
Beliefs About Older People

Variable	N	Mean	T Value	Level of Sig.
Neg. Belief				
Pretest	62	3.179	-.27	.789
Posttest	62	3.206		

Hypothesis 5: The clergy's positive beliefs about the elderly will not differ significantly before and after one planned learning experience.

The positive belief pretest mean score for the clergy as a group was higher (less positive) than the same group's positive belief posttest mean score. Table 17 shows the difference between the two means.

Table 17

Clergy's Mean Scores on Kilty and Feld's  
Positive Belief Pretest and Posttest

Variable	N	Mean	T Value	Level of Sig.
Pos. Belief				
Pretest	26	3.035	1.52	.142
Posttest	26	2.825		

Although the clergy's lower mean score on the post-test suggests a trend toward a more positive belief about the elderly after the planned learning experience, the t-test analysis indicated no significant difference. The two-tailed probability score was .142 with 25 degrees of freedom. Hypothesis five was accepted.

Hypothesis 6: The nonclergy's positive beliefs about the elderly will not differ significantly before and after one planned learning experience.

Nonclergy positive belief mean scores decreased after the planned learning experience. Nonclergy expressed more positive beliefs toward the elderly after the planned learning experience. Table 18 indicates the pretest and posttest positive belief means.

Table 18

Nonclergy's Mean Scores on Kilty and Feld's  
Positive Belief Pretest and Posttest

Variable	N	Mean	T Value	Level of Sig.
Pos. Belief				
Pretest	38	2.779	4.37*	.000
Posttest	38	2.291		

\*Significant at the .001 level.

The t-test results indicated a two-tailed probability score of .000 with 37 degrees of freedom. This analysis

showed a significant difference in nonclergy's positive beliefs before and after the planned learning experience. Mean scores indicated that nonclergy became significantly more positive in their beliefs about older people after the PLE. Hypothesis 6 was rejected.

When the clergy and nonclergy were considered together as one group, the groups' mean score on the positive belief posttest was significantly lower than the pretest mean score (see Table 19).

Table 19

All Subjects' Mean Scores on Kilty and Feld's  
Positive Belief Pretest and Posttest

Variable	N	Mean	T Value	Level of Sig.
Pos. Belief				
Pretest	64	2.883	4.27	.000
Posttest	64	2.508		

\*Significant at the .001 level.

The t-test analysis revealed a two-tailed probability score of .000. The data thus reveal that the subjects as a whole became significantly more positive after the PLE. This was true although when individual group mean scores were considered only the nonclergy scores showed a significant difference. Clergy scores indicated only a trend toward more positive beliefs.

Hypothesis 7: Clergy will exhibit a significantly higher level of knowledge about the elderly after one planned learning experience.

Clergy's knowledge mean scores increased from pretest to posttest as demonstrated in Table 20.

Table 20

Clergy's Mean Scores on Palmore's Test  
of Knowledge About Older People

Variable	N	Mean	T Value	Level of Sig.
Knowledge				
Pretest	25 *(26)	.661	-2.87**	.008
Posttest	25 *(26)	.706		

\*Data from one clergy's Palmore test were not analyzed because 5 questions were unanswered.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level.

Using the t-test for dependent samples it was determined that the clergy's mean scores differed significantly with a two-tailed probability score of .008 with 24 degrees of freedom. Hypothesis 7 was upheld, clergy did exhibit a significantly higher level of knowledge about the elderly after one planned learning experience.

Hypothesis 8: Nonclergy will exhibit a significantly higher level of knowledge about the elderly after one planned learning experience.



The nonclergy's mean score difference was .0085, indicating a slight gain in nonclergy's knowledge after attending the PLE. Application of the  $t$ -test for dependent samples to the mean scores verified that their pretest and posttest knowledge scores did not differ significantly. Table 21 shows that the level of this significance was .608. Hypothesis 8 was not supported.

Table 21

Nonclergy's Mean Scores on Palmore's Test  
of Knowledge About Older People

Variable	N	Mean	T Value	Level of Sig.
Knowledge				
Pretest	36 *(38)	.666	-.52	.608
Posttest	36 *(38)	.675		

\*Data from 2 nonclergy were not analyzed because 5 questions were not answered.

Although Hypothesis 8 was not supported, when the complete sample's knowledge gain was considered, there was a significant gain in knowledge for the entire sample. Clergy and nonclergy scores on the Palmore test were merged. As Table 22 manifests the mean scores did increase for the total group from the pretest to the posttest.

Table 22

All Subjects' Mean Scores on Palmore's Test  
of Knowledge About Older People

Variable	N	Mean	T Value	Level of Sig.
Knowledge				
Pretest	*61 (64)	.664	-1.99	.051
Posttest	*61 (64)	.688		

\*Reflects total number of subjects who answered 20 or more questions.

The t-test was used to determine a two-tailed probability of .051 with 60 degrees of freedom. Thus, if the clergy and nonclergy's scores on the Palmore test are considered together, there is a significant gain in knowledge for the entire sample. This was achieved despite the statistically nonsignificant knowledge gain of the nonclergy after the planned learning experience and points out the strength of the increase in the knowledge gain of the clergy as reflected by their scores on the Palmore test.

The data present findings related to scores on individual items of the three instruments utilized in the study. These instruments were the negative belief scale, the positive belief scale, and the knowledge measure.

### Negative Belief Scale's Findings

As Table 23 shows, statement 25 on the pretest exhibited the lowest mean score for clergy and nonclergy before and after the PLE. This low score indicates that both clergy and nonclergy tended to agree most with the negative statement that "Old people frequently talk to themselves." Statement 5 which said that "Older workers are suspicious of other workers" yielded the highest mean score (pretest and posttest) and thus indicated least agreement by clergy and nonclergy with a negative statement about the elderly.

Table 23

Clergy and Nonclergy's Mean Scores on Seven Statements  
in Kilty and Feld's Negative Belief Test

Statement	Clergy (N = 26)		Nonclergy	
	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean
4	3.92	4.35	3.87	3.36
5	4.50	5.27	4.71	4.59
19	2.96	3.23	3.00	2.97
21	3.31	3.50	3.50	3.33
22	2.50	2.77	2.37	3.25
25	2.04	1.73	1.74	1.65
42	3.81	3.73	3.11	2.66

### Positive Belief Scale's Findings

Statement 41 which stated that "Most older people try not to be a financial burden to their children" produced the

lowest mean score (pretest and posttest) for both clergy and nonclergy (see Table 24). The low mean scores on statement 41 indicate that the subjects agree with this positive statement regarding the elderly. The highest mean score (pretest and posttest) for both clergy and nonclergy was produced by statement 12. High mean scores denote a less positive belief than do lower scores (Table 24).

Table 24

Clergy and Nonclergy's Mean Scores on Ten Statements  
in Kilty and Feld's Positive Belief Test

Statement	Clergy (N = 26)		Nonclergy (N = 38)	
	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean
12	5.00	5.42	4.89	4.13
13	2.92	2.69	2.95	2.37
14	2.46	2.23	2.24	1.74
16	2.92	2.81	2.24	2.32
24	4.19	4.19	3.55	3.62
26	2.42	2.23	2.49	2.16
29	2.32	2.60	2.84	2.42
33	3.65	3.27	3.05	2.68
36	2.92	3.27	2.39	2.19
41	1.62	1.92	1.32	1.58

#### Knowledge Measure's Findings

As Table 25 indicates, statement 1, which stated that "The majority of old people past age 65 or over are senile (i.e., defective memory, disoriented or demented)" presented

Table 25

Clergy and Nonclergy's Mean Error Scores on Statements  
in Palmore's Test of Knowledge About Older People

Statement	Clergy (N = 26)		Nonclergy (N = 38)	
	Pretest % Error	Posttest % Error	Pretest % Error	Posttest % Error
1	0	0	0	2.6
2	65.4	30.8	52.5	34.2
3	11.5	15.4	5.3	13.2
4	34.6	19.2	39.5	15.8
5	3.8	7.7	0	7.9
6	11.5	11.5	7.9	2.6
7	73.1	42.3	65.8	57.9
8	11.5	23.8	31.6	31.6
9	15.4	15.4	18.4	18.4
10	3.8	11.5	5.3	2.6
11	7.7	11.5	28.9	26.3
12	65.4	50.0	47.4	42.1
13	0	0	2.6	5.3
14	3.8	3.8	15.8	7.9
15	3.8	15.4	15.8	44.7
16	46.2	57.6	42.1	50.0
17	26.9	26.9	39.5	31.6
18	15.4	15.4	28.9	31.6
19	96.2	7.7	92.1	89.5
20	69.2	50.0	55.3	47.4
21	69.2	76.9	76.3	78.9
22	30.8	15.4	18.4	10.5
23	65.4	65.4	68.4	86.8
24	65.4	61.5	57.9	47.7
25	61.5	57.6	44.7	57.9

the lowest mean error percentage for both clergy and non-clergy on the pretest and posttest knowledge measure. The second lowest mean score was obtained on statement 13 which said that "It is almost impossible for most old people to learn new things." This item showed no error for clergy and nonclergy on the pretest, but error increased slightly for both groups on the posttest (Table 25). "Over 15 percent of the U.S. population are now age 65 or over" (statement 19) was the item most often missed by both clergy and nonclergy on the knowledge pretest. However, the clergy mean percentage of error on statement 19 decreased from 96.2% (pretest) to 7.7% (posttest). Nonclergy mean error change on the same item was slight: 91.1% (pretest) to 89.5% (posttest).

### Summary

Data were analyzed as they related to the eight hypotheses. Scores on individual items of the three instruments utilized were also presented. This summary presents findings from the data related to three categories: negative beliefs, positive beliefs, and knowledge.

### Negative Beliefs

When clergy and nonclergy's negative beliefs about older people were assessed before the planned learning experience no significant difference between the two groups was found.

Clergy's negative beliefs about the elderly did not differ significantly before and after the PLE, although mean scores on the pretest and posttest indicated a trend for the clergy to be less negative after the PLE.

Nonclergy's negative beliefs about older people did not show a significant difference before and after the planned learning experience. Clergy showed a trend toward less negative beliefs after the PLE. Nonclergy evidenced a trend toward increased negative beliefs after the PLE. Neither of the trends was statistically significant.

The negative belief scale scores indicated that the most negative belief held by both clergy and nonclergy (pretest and posttest) was the belief that old people frequently talk to themselves.

### Positive Beliefs

Two hypotheses related to positive beliefs were supported by the data, and one was rejected. No significant difference between clergy and nonclergy's positive beliefs about the elderly was found before the planned learning experience. The pretest mean score for the clergy was higher, less positive, than the pretest nonclergy mean, but the difference between the means was not statistically significant, therefore hypothesis two which proposed no difference was accepted.

The data confirmed the hypothesis that clergy's positive beliefs about the elderly would not differ

significantly before and after one planned learning experience. No significant difference was found before or after the PLE, although the clergy's mean scores were more positive, i.e., lower, after the PLE.

The data showed a significant difference in nonclergy's positive beliefs before and after the planned learning experience. Pretest and posttest mean scores indicated that nonclergy were significantly more positive in their beliefs about older people after the PLE. The hypothesis that there would be no change in nonclergy's positive beliefs after the PLE was rejected.

When data for both groups (clergy and nonclergy) were combined, it was found that the aggregate group became significantly more positive in their beliefs following the PLE.

The positive belief scale scores indicated that the most positive belief held by both clergy and nonclergy (pretest and posttest) was the belief that most older people try not to be a financial burden to their children.

### Knowledge

Two hypotheses about knowledge were considered. One of these hypotheses was supported, and one was refuted.

It was hypothesized that both clergy and nonclergy would exhibit significantly higher levels of knowledge about the elderly after the planned learning experience. The data supported this idea in regard to the clergy, but not in relation to the nonclergy.



The clergy's mean scores increased significantly after the PLE, indicating a higher level of knowledge. Nonclergy's mean score difference denoted a nonsignificant gain in knowledge after exposure to the planned learning experience. This finding was contrary to the expected result.

When pretest and posttest data from the combined clergy and nonclergy group were analyzed, a significant gain in knowledge was noted for the entire group.

The knowledge measure indicated that clergy and nonclergy (pretest and posttest) displayed the lowest mean score on an item questioning whether the majority of older people are senile. The highest mean error score for clergy and nonclergy was produced by an item that inquired about the percentage of people over 65 in the United States. Clergy decreased their mean error score on this item following the planned learning experience, nonclergy showed only slight change.

CHAPTER V  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION,  
AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to survey clergy and nonclergy's beliefs and knowledge about the elderly and to determine the effect of a planned learning experience on clergy and nonclergy's beliefs and knowledge. Social learning theory provided a conceptual orientation for the study.

There were 64 subjects in the study; 26 clergy and 38 nonclergy. The clergy included 6 women and 20 men; mean age of the clergy was 46; 22 clergy (85%) had attended graduate school and/or seminary; and 9 represented the Catholic church while the remaining 17 were affiliated with 8 different protestant denominations. The nonclergy group contained 8 men and 30 women; group mean age of nonclergy was 54; 10.5% (4 nonclergy) had attended graduate school and/or seminary; and 19 represented Catholic churches while 13 were associated with 8 different protestant churches and 6 listed no religious association.

Subjects were participants in two "Workshops for Religious Leadership on Aging" sponsored by the Michigan

Office of Services to Aging's Ecumenical Interfaith Task Force on Ministry and Aging held at Petoskey and Roscommon, Michigan in the spring of 1978. During the PLE's Kilty and Feld's Elderly Attitude Survey (1976) and Palmore's Facts on Aging Quiz (1977) were administered as pretests and posttests to measure beliefs and knowledge about the elderly.

The t-test was used to analyze pretest and posttest data from the Kilty and Feld positive belief scale and negative belief scale. This statistical method was also utilized in analyzing data assessed by the Palmore measure of knowledge about older people.

The primary findings resulting from the data analyses are as follows:

1. Prior to participation in a planned learning experience there was no significant difference between clergy and nonclergy's negative beliefs about the elderly.
2. Clergy and nonclergy's positive beliefs about the elderly did not differ significantly before the planned learning experience.
3. Clergy's negative beliefs about the elderly did not differ significantly before and after the planned learning experience.

4. Nonclergy's negative beliefs about older people were not significantly altered by the PLE.
5. Clergy's positive beliefs about the elderly were not changed significantly by the PLE, although their scores were slightly lower (more positive).
6. Nonclergy positive beliefs increased significantly after participation in the PLE.
7. When the clergy and nonclergy were considered as one group, the data indicated that the subjects as a whole became significantly more positive in their beliefs about older people after the PLE.
8. Clergy exhibited a significantly higher level of knowledge about the elderly after the planned learning experience.
9. Nonclergy mean scores indicated no significant gain in nonclergy's knowledge about the elderly after the planned learning experience.
10. The clergy and nonclergy's combined scores on the Palmore test when considered together indicate a significant gain in knowledge for the combined group.

### Limitations of the Study

1. The content of the PLE was determined by the Michigan Office of Services to Aging's Ecumenical Inter-faith Task Force on Ministry and Aging and was not under the control of the researcher. Although PLE planners did not design the content to coincide specifically with the test instruments used, they were aware of the concepts the tests focused upon and took them into consideration.

2. No comparison group was employed so it was not possible to separate learning which might have occurred as a result of the administration of the instruments from that which might have occurred as a result of exposure to the PLE.

3. Participants in the PLE, both clergy and nonclergy, represented a small number of the persons to whom letters/brochures were sent. Participants might have represented persons who already had a greater interest in older people than non-participants. Clergy and nonclergy who participated may not be representative of their respective populations. Generalizations beyond the sample cannot be made.

### Conclusions

Within the bounds of the study, the following conclusions are justified:

1. Clergy are found to hold beliefs about older people as negative as those of nonclergy. It is not known why this is true, but it can be concluded that the clergy were not less negative toward older people than are the nonclergy.

2. Nonclergy are found to hold as positive beliefs about older people as the clergy. It can be concluded that affiliation with the clergy group does not indicate more positive beliefs about the elderly than does nonaffiliation.

3. Clergy's negative beliefs about the elderly did not show significant change after the PLE, which leads to the conclusion that the PLE alone was not effective in bringing about change in clergy's negative beliefs about older people.

4. Nonclergy's negative beliefs about older people were not significantly altered by the PLE, which leads to the conclusion that the PLE alone was not effective as a change agent of nonclergy's negative beliefs about older people.

5. Clergy's positive beliefs about the elderly were not changed significantly by the PLE, although their scores were slightly lower (more positive). Therefore, the PLE are judged as insufficient to modify clergy's positive beliefs about older people.

6. Because positive beliefs increased significantly for the nonclergy after the PLE, it can be concluded that

the PLE served as an effective change agent, altering non-clergy's positive beliefs about the elderly.

7. When the clergy and nonclergy were considered as one group, the data indicated that the subjects as a whole became significantly more positive in their beliefs after the PLE. This finding represents the very great change in nonclergy's positive belief combined with only slight (statistically insignificant) change of clergy's positive beliefs. It is concluded that considering the subjects as a group in relation to positive belief change can be misleading. When the two groups were viewed separately, the nonclergy became significantly more positive after the PLE, while the clergy did not.

8. Clergy exhibited a significantly higher level of knowledge about the elderly after the PLE, therefore it is concluded that the PLE was the primary factor in producing the change.

9. Nonclergy did not demonstrate a significantly higher level of knowledge about older people after the PLE, thus it can be concluded that the PLE was not effective in producing knowledge change for the nonclergy.

10. The clergy and nonclergy's combined scores on the Palmore knowledge test when considered together indicate a significant gain in knowledge for the combined group. However, separate analysis of the data for the two groups

leads to the conclusion that the PLE was an effective change agent for the clergy, but not for the nonclergy. It is suggested that the finding of a combined group gain in knowledge be used cautiously in planning future PLE's.

### Discussion of Findings

It was assumed that negative and positive beliefs are separate and coexist. Based on this assumption, two different and distinct belief systems were dealt with in this research. Theoretically, one belief system could be changed without altering the other. For example, a group's negative beliefs could become more or less negative without altering their positive beliefs. Hence, positive and negative mean scores were not combined for analysis because these scores were considered representative of distinct separate belief systems.

### Negative Beliefs

No significant difference was found between clergy and nonclergy's negative beliefs about the elderly before the PLE. No difference was hypothesized because it was thought that clergy would tend to express about the same level of agreement with the negative beliefs as society members in general. The higher level of education of the clergy group was not considered to be an influential factor in decreasing their level of agreement with negative beliefs about older people because preparation of the clergy



for the ministry has not typically stressed gerontology. Moburg and Gray (1977) noted that: "Many clergy realize that their educational preparation and training for ministries with the aging has been deficient" (p. 195).

Clergy did not significantly change their negative beliefs about the elderly as a result of the PLE. Perhaps the PLE did not significantly decrease the clergy's negative beliefs because that change would be considered an incongruent change. "Incongruent change . . . is defined as a decrease in the negativity of an originally negative attitude" (Krech, Crutchfield, & Ballachey, 1962, p. 216).

Since beliefs are considered the cognitive component of attitudes (Krech, Crutchfield, & Ballachey, 1962), then to attempt to decrease the negativity of the clergy's negative beliefs could be interpreted as an incongruent change. Incongruent change may be more difficult than congruent change. Krech et al. (1962) hypothesized that congruent attitudinal change is always easier to produce than incongruent change if other things are equal.

Nonclergy's negative beliefs about older people did not show significant difference before and after the PLE, and again the Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachey hypothesis must be considered. Their explanation appears to be particularly appropriate in relation to the nonclergy as the slight post-PLE change in their negative beliefs was toward increased negative belief (congruent change).

### Positive Beliefs

No significant difference between clergy and non-clergy's positive beliefs about older people was found before the planned learning experience. The clergy were slightly less positive than the nonclergy. No difference had been anticipated because it was expected that the groups would reflect positive beliefs that would be representative of their common cultural background. Although the clergy group tended to be better educated than the nonclergy, this was not considered to be a significant factor because of the limited amount of courses and training related to gerontology in the clergy's educational experience.

The clergy as a group became slightly more positive toward the elderly after the PLE, but the data did not show that the planned learning experience significantly changed the clergy's positive beliefs. This finding was interesting to consider in relation to the nonclergy's significant change in positive beliefs after the PLE's.

Nonclergy as a group became significantly more positive in their positive beliefs toward the elderly after the PLE, which supports the idea that congruent change, or change that is either an increase in the positivity of an existing positive attitude or increase in the negativity of an existing negative attitude, is easier to produce than an incongruent change. Additional support is provided by the

fact that the two groups (clergy and nonclergy) considered as a whole became significantly more positive after the PLE. However, this argument is weakened when it is remembered that while data from the nonclergy considered alone and from the two combined groups indicated significantly more positive beliefs after the PLE, this was not true of the clergy's positive belief data.

#### Changing Attitudes: Further Considerations

From the data in this study it appears that a one-day PLE was effective in changing nonclergy's positive beliefs about the elderly. This leads to the question of how learning experiences can be developed that are even more effective. To consider this complex issue several aspects of attitude change are considered.

First, attitudes are relatively enduring and resistant to change unless a concerted effort is made to alter them, and then the belief component of the attitude is the easiest to change with additional knowledge. The feeling and action components are more resistant to change. In this study the focus was on the easier to change belief component. To produce a change in feelings and actions a longer term learning experience could be required. The study does not reveal whether the change is stable over time.

Second, whether new information changes beliefs depends on the nature of the learning situation. For example,

Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachey (1962) believe that group listening is more effective in producing change than solitary listening if the majority of the group is in favor of the position of the communicator. In the PLE's described here, the information was presented to groups. The position of the PLE presenters was to attempt to increase the group's positive beliefs and decrease negative beliefs about older people. They did increase nonclergy's positive beliefs.

A third factor that determines whether new information changes attitude is the characteristics of the communicators (PLE presenters). To be effective these people need to be seen as members of the group they are trying to influence, and they must also be seen as credible. PLE leaders in this study established their credibility by noting their education and professional accomplishments, which may have been more effective with the nonclergy than the clergy. Because the clergy subjects represented several denominations, credibility with them may have been dependent on whether the PLE leaders were also leaders in the subject's religious denomination. Future learning experiences sponsored by denominations could be more effective in changing clergy's beliefs about the elderly. These experiences could be in-service denominational PLE's or classes provided to seminary students. Changing the negative beliefs of the nonclergy might be better accomplished in the future by providing all nonclergy PLE's led by nonclergy,

which could intensify the feeling that the leaders were group members.

Fourth, the form of the information is also important in changing attitudes. Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachy (1962) suggested, for example, that a one-sided presentation was found to be more effective in inducing congruent change. The PLE's in the study were one-sided in that they presented a generally positive picture of the elderly. The major belief change that occurred was a congruent change, an increase in positive beliefs. Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachey also noted that less well educated persons are more influenced by the one-sided argument than well educated persons are. In this study the nonclergy had less education than the clergy; and the nonclergy evidenced the positive belief change.

All of the aspects of attitude change suggested here contribute to the evaluation and development of learning experiences designed to change attitudes toward the elderly.

### Knowledge

The data from the study showed that the PLE significantly increased the clergy's knowledge about older people as measured by Palmore's (1977) test, but did not similarly increase the knowledge level of the nonclergy. This lack of significant knowledge gain by the nonclergy was contrary to expectation.

It is not known why the clergy learned more than the nonclergy about the elderly. Some suggestions about the difference in learning between the two groups follow.

First, the clergy may have had a greater need to learn about aging and older people because many of them have experienced increasing numbers of elderly church members in recent years. They may have participated in the PLE with the idea of gaining information that they could use in their work. Perhaps the clergy's use of the knowledge gained in the PLE was more specific and immediately useable for them than for the nonclergy. The clergy's use of this knowledge about older people could be assessed by evaluating the programs they developed for the elderly in their church after the PLE.

A second reason why the clergy learned more from the PLE than the nonclergy could be the clergy's greater motivation. In this instance, the clergy's motivation could come from the satisfaction they saw they could derive from learning more about older people. They might also have seen further satisfaction being derived from the use of this knowledge in developing church programs and activities for the elderly.

Finally, the difference in the knowledge gain between the two groups could be the result of differences in their educational backgrounds. The greater extent of the clergy's

prior formal education could have helped them to more efficiently process the information presented in the PLE's. Because the clergy can significantly increase their knowledge about the elderly in a one-day PLE, denominations may decide to develop these planned learning experiences as part of their in-service training program, or local ministerial alliances could sponsor the PLE's. Additional consideration of the more limited educational experiences of the nonclergy when planning the format of future learning experiences about older people could increase nonclergy's learning. PLE's about the elderly could be designed especially for different nonclergy groups.

Increased knowledge about the elderly may provide church leaders with information needed to develop programs that in turn provide the elderly and others with information that increases their ability to interact effectively with their environment. The PLE's in this study increased the clergy's knowledge about the elderly. Assessment of clergy's use of the increased knowledge would be a logical next step.

#### Implications for Further Research

The following questions for further research suggested by this study may be of particular interest to human ecologists and/or religious educators.

Would recent seminary graduates with no educational background or training in gerontology exhibit significantly

different negative beliefs about the elderly than experienced clergy? Is actual work experience with the elderly a factor in determining beliefs?

Is a traditional long term structured educational experience a necessary factor for modifying potential clergy's negative beliefs about older people? Would theology students' negative beliefs about older people differ before and after a college religious education program that also included gerontological study and training?

Would clergy who exhibit a more positive belief about older people as a result of PLE's report more time spent with elderly parishioners a year later?

Do activities and programs for the elderly differ significantly before and one year after clergy have increased their knowledge about older people through planned learning experiences?

Would the clergy's more positive beliefs gained through PLE attendance result in measurable changes in their daily schedule? Would more time be spent with the elderly, or in dealing with issues related to the elderly, a year after the PLE as contrasted with time spent before the PLE?

Are elderly church members' positive beliefs about older people more positive than clergy's positive beliefs? Are elderly church members' negative beliefs about the elderly more negative than clergy's negative beliefs?



Given a list of developmental tasks to be accomplished by older people, how important would the clergy rate their church as a resource to help them accomplish each of the tasks?

Would PLE's similar to those developed by the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging increase the level of knowledge of older people about themselves and the aging process?

Would groups such as the nonclergy who attended the PLE's increase their knowledge about older people to a greater extent if the information were presented to them in a less sophisticated manner than was true at the PLE's utilized in the study?

If PLE's were provided for elderly church members and their knowledge about older people increased, would the time that they spent in church activities increase, as measured one year after the workshop?

What is the theoretical orientation held by the clergy toward the elderly? What indicators of the impact of this orientation on the elderly and programs for the elderly exist?

Human ecologists concerned with lifelong learning would find it of interest to determine possible relationships between and among beliefs and knowledge about aging and attitudes toward education among different age groups with varying levels of education. For example, the

following research questions might be asked: Do professionals (for whom in-service training might be provided) consider test-taking following a PLE to be a rewarding experience in which they can exhibit their beliefs held and knowledge gained about aging? Do less well-educated groups regard test-taking as a punishing experience due to, perhaps, former negative educational experiences (Mowrer, 1960)? Do young adults, middle aged, and older people agree or differ in their expressed beliefs and knowledge about older people and their attitude toward education? Such a study could provide a data base for separating out attitudes toward education as reflected by attitudes toward test-taking and actual modifications in beliefs and knowledge held about aging after exposure to a PLE.

A study using a comparison group that was not exposed to a PLE and one which utilizes a larger, random sample of clergy and nonclergy should be designed. The content of the PLE could be planned more specifically to coincide with the belief scales and Facts on Aging Quiz. Such a study could take into account certain limitations of the present study.

How do beliefs and knowledge about older people held by clergy agree or differ from those held by leaders in other community organizations and how are possible differences reflected in the programming provided by the organizations they lead?

What is the relationship between clergy's beliefs and knowledge about aging and their knowledge of community resources available for older people? If clergy with more negative beliefs and lower knowledge bases about aging are also less well-informed about community resources for older people, how might community service professionals best provide programming to effect positive change?

Ward (1977) found that attitudes toward older people were related to feelings of self-esteem in subjects who were 60 years of age or older. A study designed to establish relationships between positive and negative beliefs, knowledge about aging, and self-esteem in a random sample of clergy and nonclergy would provide additional cues for educational programming.

How might clergy and other community service professionals and/or Cooperative Extension Human Ecologists determine their public's attitudes toward budgetary allocations for programming for particular age groups within their purview? Longino and Kitson (1976) found clergy thought that their church congregations were youth oriented and that they should allocate most resources for younger people and families. Would surveys of organizational memberships, including church congregations, analyzed by age group support this finding? If such groups do reflect a youth orientation, would members suggest that more funds be allocated for younger than for older people's community

programs? Would leaders' opinions be in agreement with those of their memberships?

How could Human Ecology Colleges best provide PLE's about aging to professionals working in the community? Given the low attendance per letter/brochure mailed in this study, how can the number of community service professionals attending PLE's be increased? For example, would Human Ecology Colleges be able to interest more clergy in PLE's about aging if the PLE's were sponsored cooperatively with local ministerial alliances, and theology/religion departments? What sources of funding might be available for such a cooperative effort?

How can human ecologists profit from the knowledge that elderly people turn to the church in time of crisis (after the family)? If this is true should human ecologists who have the expertise to work with the elderly consider how they might work cooperatively with churches to better meet the needs of the elderly?

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**APPENDIX A**  
**TEST INSTRUMENTS**

## Questionnaire Cover Sheet

PRE # \_\_\_\_\_

### ATTITUDES TOWARD OLDER PEOPLE

Task Force on Religion and Aging  
Michigan Office of Services to the Aging  
300 East Michigan Avenue, P.O. Box 30026  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

This questionnaire is designed to assist us in planning future workshops for clergy and lay people. Please complete the sections as rapidly as possible without spending too much time on each item. Thank you for your time!

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your sex? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What church/agency do you represent?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_ Clergy      \_\_\_\_\_ Layperson
5. How many years of service (paid or volunteer) have you had in a congregation? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Your education?      \_\_\_\_\_ High School  
                                     \_\_\_\_\_ College  
                                     \_\_\_\_\_ Seminary/Graduate School

## Kilty and Feld's Elderly Attitude Survey

PART ONE

The following statements present various views about life and aging. For each statement indicate the position which most nearly represents your own view by circling the appropriate number.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Can't Decide	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Most older people are capable of new adjustments when the situation demands it. . . . .						1	2 3 4 5 6 7
2. Older people have a chance to do all the things they wanted to do. . . . .						1	2 3 4 5 6 7
3. It is sad for children to have to grow up in this world the way things look for the future. . . . .						1	2 3 4 5 6 7
4. Old people frequently talk to themselves. . . .						1	2 3 4 5 6 7
5. Older workers are suspicious of other workers .						1	2 3 4 5 6 7
6. The future looks bright for today's children. .						1	2 3 4 5 6 7
7. Older people are generally stuck in their homes . . . . .						1	2 3 4 5 6 7
8. It is useless to write public officials because your problems do not interest them. . .						1	2 3 4 5 6 7
9. It would probably be better if most old people lived in residential units with people of their own age . . . . .						1	2 3 4 5 6 7
10. One of the most interesting qualities of elderly people is their accounts of their past experiences. . . . .						1	2 3 4 5 6 7
11. Older workers are interested only in putting in their hours. . . . .						1	2 3 4 5 6 7
12. The government will see to it that the people of this country have a better life . . .						1	2 3 4 5 6 7

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Can't Decide	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13. Elderly persons generally take a keen interest in politics . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Older people love life . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Older people prefer to read newspapers rather than books. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. People grow wiser with the coming of old age. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. The government should take care of elderly persons. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Older persons fail in emergencies. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Older people are lonely. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. You can always find something ahead to make life worth living . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Older people feel that their children neglect them . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Old people hold on to their opinions . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. These days a person doesn't know whom he or she can count on . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. You can count on finding a nice residential neighborhood when there is a sizable number of old people living in it . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Older people worry about financial security . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. Older persons are good with children . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. In spite of what people say, the life of the average person is getting worse. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. Most old people should be more concerned with their appearance; they're too untidy. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. Most old people are very relaxing to be with . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Can't Decide	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30. Most old people are usually supported by their children or old age pensions . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. You can trust most people. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. Older workers take jobs away from younger workers. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. Older people make friends easily . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. Older workers keep younger people from getting ahead. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. It is useless to plan for tomorrow; all we can do is live for the present. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. Older people look forward to the future as much as any other people. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. Older people have too much power in business and politics. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. The lives of most people will get better in the next few years. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. Old people should not be allowed to have driver's licenses. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. Older workers cannot take criticism without getting angry. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. Most older people try not to be a financial burden to their children . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. Elderly people walk slowly . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43. Old people expect their children to support them . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44. Older workers increase costs of pensions for employers. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45. Older persons prefer to live alone . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Palmore's Knowledge of Aging Quiz

PART TWO

The following statements are designed to cover the basic physical, mental and social aspects of aging. Please circle "T" for the statements that you consider to be true, or "F" for the statements you consider to be false.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The majority of old people past age 65 or over are senile (i.e., defective memory, disoriented or demented).                           | T | F |
| 2. All five senses tend to decline in old age.  | T | F |
| 3. Most old people have no interest in, or capacity for, sexual relations   | T | F |
| 4. Lung vital capacity tends to decline in old age.   | T | F |
| 5. The majority of old people feel miserable most of the time.  | T | F |
| 6. Physical strength tends to decline in old age.   | T | F |
| 7. At least 10 percent of the aged are living in long-stay institutions (i.e., nursing homes, mental hospital, homes for the aged, etc.). | T | F |
| 8. Aged drivers have fewer accidents per person than drives under age 65.   | T | F |
| 9. Most older workers cannot work as effectively as younger workers.  | T | F |
| 10. About 80 percent of the aged are healthy enough to carry out their normal activities.   | T | F |
| 11. Most old people are set in their ways and are unable to change.   | T | F |
| 12. Old people usually take longer to learn something new.  | T | F |
| 13. It is almost impossible for most old people to learn new things.  | T | F |
| 14. The reaction time of most old people tends to be slower than the reaction time of younger people.                                     | T | F |



- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 15. In general, most old people are pretty much alike.  | T | F |
| 16. The majority of old people report that they are seldom bored.   | T | F |
| 17. The majority of old people are socially isolated and lonely.  | T | F |
| 18. Older workers have fewer accidents than younger workers.  | T | F |
| 19. Over 15 percent of the U.S. population are now age 65 or over.  | T | F |
| 20. Most medical practitioners tend to give low priority to the aged.   | T | F |
| 21. The majority of older people have incomes below the poverty level (as defined by the Federal government).   | T | F |
| 22. The majority of old people are working or would like to have some kind of work to do.   | T | F |
| 23. Older people tend to become more religious as they age.   | T | F |
| 24. The majority of old people report that they are seldom irritated or angry.  | T | F |
| 25. The health and socio-economic status of older people (compared to younger people) in the year 2000 will probably be worse or about the same as now. | T | F |

**APPENDIX B**  
**PLANNED LEARNING EXPERIENCE MATERIALS**

Letter from Michigan Office of  
Services to the Aging

February 16, 1978

Dear Pastor:

Take a moment to examine your congregation, what percentage of your people are over age 60? You will probably find that from 35-55 percent of your membership is in this category. The combination of a declining birthrate and a longer life expectancy will continue to increase the average age of your congregation. In addition, statistics demonstrate that ever larger numbers of older people are moving to Northern Lower Michigan to retire, thus compounding tendency of both church and community to become older.

To help deal with this reality, the Office of Services to the Aging has convened an ecumenical, interfaith Task Force on Religion and Aging. A major facet of the group's work is the improvement of church and synagogue responsiveness to the needs and potential of senior citizens.

We are planning three one-day conferences for clergy and key lay leaders during Spring, 1978. These will take place in Alpena, April 19, Petoskey, April 20, and Kirtland, April 21 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. We will focus on attitudes about older people, information about the aging process and practical programming ideas for use with your congregation. We are certain that you and one of your key lay-people will want to attend one of these meetings.

We will contact you to provide more specific information, and to answer any questions that may arise.

Sincerely,

Benjamin M. Baldus, Chairperson  
Task Force on Religion and Aging

# MINISTRIES

*with...*

## OLDER

## ADULTS

- \* WHAT SHAPES OUR ATTITUDES? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT AGING? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* WHAT PROGRAMS WORK? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* WHAT CAN CLERGY & LAY PEOPLE DO? \_\_\_\_\_

### THREE CONFERENCES

APRIL 19... ALPENA COMMUNITY COLLEGE... ALPENA

APRIL 20... NORTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN COLLEGE... PETOSKEY

APRIL 21... KIRTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE... ROSCOMMON

(over...)

If you take a moment to examine your congregation, you will probably find that from 35 to 55% of your membership is age 60 or over. The combination of a declining birth rate and longer life expectancy will continue to increase the average age of your congregation. In addition, statistics demonstrate that ever larger numbers of older people are moving to Northern Lower Michigan to retire, thus compounding the tendency of both church and community to become older.

To help deal with this reality, a committee of local people in cooperation with the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging have planned three one-day conferences for Spring 1978. These will focus on attitudes about older people, information about the aging process, and practical programming that will work in your congregation. We are certain that you and one of your key lay people will want to attend one of these meetings.

---

RESERVATION FORM

Clergy Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Lay Person Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Conference Preference: (please check one)

\_\_\_\_\_ April 19, Alpena Community College, Alpena, 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
(Lunch on your own)

\_\_\_\_\_ April 20, North Central Michigan College, Petoskey, 9:30 a.m. to  
3:30 p.m. Lunch? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_\_ April 21, Kirtland Community College, Roscommon, 9:30 a.m. to  
3:30 p.m. Lunch? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

## Agenda for Planned Learning Experience

### AGENDA

Gathering Period (9:30 a.m.)

Registration

Refreshments

Becoming Aware of the Aging Process

Completion of Questionnaire I

Film "Peege"

Reaction Period

Realities of Aging

Imagining Old Age

Physical Realities of Aging (slide show)

Some Concerns of Michigan's Older Population

Reaction Period

Lunch Break (12:00 noon)

Aging and the Religious Community

Personal/Professional Attitudes

Presentation: "Ministry with Seniors--Revisiting Yesterday  
for Tomorrow's Journey"

Reaction Period

Break

Program--Building in Your Congregation

How Seniors View the Religious Community

Where to Get Help--Other Resources

Taking the First Step

Completion of Questionnaire II

Adjournment (3:30 p.m.)

## Literature for Planned Learning Experience

Browning, D. S. Preface to a practical theology of aging. Pastoral Psychology, 1975, 24(229), 151-166.

Butler, R. N. The life review: An interpretation of reminiscence in the aged. Psychiatry, 1963, 26, 65-76.

Heneckin, N. J. & Hellerich, M. J. The church's ministry with older adults: A theological basis. New York: Lutheran Church in America. (Date unknown)

Heschel, A. J. To grow old in wisdom. Christian Ministry, 1971, October, 31-37.

Michigan aging citizens: Characteristics, opinions, and service utilization patterns. Lansing: Michigan Offices of Services to the Aging, 1974.

Moburg, D. O. Religiosity in old age. Gerontologist, 1965, 5(2), 497-508.

Peterson, J. A. On being alone. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Retired Persons & National Retired Teachers Association. (Date unknown)

Resources for religious leadership in aging. Lansing: Michigan Office of Services to the Aging. (No date)

Suggested areas for programming. Lansing: Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, 1977.

Weinberg, J. What do I say to my mother when I have nothing to say? Geriatrics, 1974, 29(11), 155-159.