

**RESPONDING PASTORALLY TO
THE AGEING POPULATION:
WITH A PROPOSED TRAINING PROGRAMME
FOR CLERGY AND LAY PASTORAL WORKERS**

**This thesis is presented for the degree of
Research Masters (with training)**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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ABSTRACT

The increased longevity in contemporary western society is impacting on many service and caring organisations in that they are needing to find ways of responding to the increasing number of older persons who need support. The Church is not immune from this as statistics demonstrate that the age demographic within the Church is rapidly changing to include many more older persons. However, evidence is strong that the Church to date has not been as alert as it could have been to the implications of the ageing population, nor has it been awake to the potential available within adult ministry. Therefore scholars and gerontologists are strident in their attempts to wake the Church from its slumber with respect to responding to the ageing population.

The impetus of this research was to determine how alert the Anglican Diocese of Perth is to this rapidly increasing age demographic, and how well equipped its clergy and lay pastoral workers are to respond to the increasing number of older persons both within the Church and within society. To achieve this, a survey was conducted amongst a selection of clergy and lay pastoral workers in the Diocese of Perth. As part of the survey, comments were sought from participants on how important they believed training in ministry to older persons was for them, and what factors would enable and encourage them to attend training in this area.

The literature reviewed for this research, the survey results, and the ensuing discussion combine to underline the need for ministry to older persons to be taken seriously by the Church. As a way of stimulating interest, and equipping clergy and lay pastoral workers, in the area of pastoral care of older persons, this thesis provides the structure of a training programme that it is envisaged will be offered to the Anglican Diocese of Perth.

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During the period of my candidature, I took advantage of Murdoch University's postgraduate funding to attend, and present a paper at, the Third International Conference on Ageing, Spirituality and Palliative Care in Adelaide, South Australia (2004). I am very grateful for this funding. However, the funding provided by Murdoch University was limited and so I am also very grateful to the Anglican Diocese of Perth, through the then Archbishop Dr Peter Carnley, who provided the additional funding to cover costs to attend the Conference.

CHAPTER ONE

[Ministry to older persons] is one of the great sleepers in the Church. (Survey response)¹

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Recognition of an Ageing Population

Evidence is mounting that contemporary western society is faced with the challenge of how to respond to a rapidly increasing ageing population, referred to by terminology such as a “gerontological revolution”², or an “ageing explosion”³. Increased longevity is a worldwide phenomenon. According to the United Nations, currently one in 10 people in the world is aged 60 and over, whereas by 2050 the figure will be one in five, and in developed countries where that is already the figure, people over 60 will reach one in four, or even one in two.⁴ This increase is occurring with great rapidity in countries such as America and the United Kingdom. However, because the focus of this research is specifically within a region of Western Australia, national and local statistics with respect to the ageing population are the most significant to note. According to the *Australian Bureau of Statistics*, the proportion of Australia’s population aged 65 years and over will increase from approximately 16.1% in 2003 to 36% in 2046.⁵ It is expected that the biggest increase in older persons will be between 2011 and 2021 as the baby boomers start to enter this age group, and the most rapidly increasing age group will be those 80 years and over whose numbers are expected to increase from 3.3% in 2003 to 9.8% in 2046.⁶ The 2004 Australian Government publication *Australia’s Demographic Challenges* reported that life expectancy in

¹ Quotations at the beginning of each chapter are from responses by participants in the survey conducted as part of this research. As the survey was anonymous, participants cannot be identified.

² Lindsey P. Pherigo, “Gerontology and the New Testament”, *Journal of Religion and Aging* 6, No.3-4 (1989), 75.

³ Susanne S. Paul and James A. Paul, *Humanity Comes of Age: The New Context for Ministry with the Elderly* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994), xv.

⁴ *Longevity.ca*, http://www.longevity.ca/info_demographics_of_aging.htm (accessed 16 August 2005).

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, “2. Australian Social Trends, Population, National and State Population Summary Tables”, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/94713ad445ff1425ca25682000192af2/8ef24f9fe10ee078ca25703b0080ccaf!OpenDocument> (accessed 25 October 2005).

⁶ *Idem*. Baby boomers are people born between 1945 and 1962.

Australia increased from approximately 68 years in 1960 to 78 years in 2004, and is expected to increase to 83 years by 2042.⁷ On the night of the 2001 census in Australia, there were 2,503 people aged 100 or more.⁸ In Western Australia, approximately 14% of the 2004 population was aged 65 years and over, a figure that is expected to increase to 37.3% by 2051.⁹ In this State, life expectancy for non indigenous men has increased from approximately 54 years in 1991 to 77 in 2005, and from approximately 60 years to 83 years for women.

This paper acknowledges, but does not elaborate upon, the cultural diversity of older persons. For example, according to the 2001 census reported in the publication *Older Australia at a Glance*, 33% of people 65 and over were born overseas.¹⁰ It is also acknowledged, but not elaborated upon, that there is only a small percentage of older indigenous Australians, a mere .5%.¹¹

There are a number of contributing factors to this increased longevity throughout the western world, including Australia. The most significant of these factors, as noted by Ross Larson in his article "There's Aging in Your Future", are the benefits of modern technology and medicine, and a healthier lifestyle.¹² There is also a significant decline in birth rates which, combined with greater longevity, will increasingly affect the age distribution of western populations. For example, statistics in Western Australia reveal that "the current birth rate of thirteen babies for every 1,000 people ... is a third of that

⁷ Commonwealth of Australia, *Australia's Demographic Challenges* (Canberra: Department of Communications, Information and Technology and the Arts, 2004), 20. In America, it is projected that a child born in 2001 would live approximately 30 years longer than a child born in 1900 (Department of Health and Human Services (America), Administration on Aging, "Statistics - A Profile of Older Americans: 2003", www.aoa.gov/prof/Statistics/profile/2003/2_pf.asp (accessed 13 May 2004).

⁸ Ibid., 11. Worldwide, the number of centenarians is expected to increase 15-fold, reaching 2.2 million by 2050 (*Longevity.ca*, op.cit.)

⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, op.cit.

¹⁰ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), *Older Australia at a Glance* (Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, 2002), 12.

¹¹ Ibid., 14.

¹² Ross Henry Larson, "There's Aging in Your Future", *The Clergy Journal* 76, No.3 (2000), 24.

reported at the turn of the century".¹³

Recognising the trend within western society of increased longevity, the then Australian Federal Minister for Ageing, Mr Kevin Andrews wrote in the foreword of *Older Australia at a Glance*:

*Australia, like many other countries, is experiencing the start of an unprecedented ageing of the population that will continue over several decades. Significant changes will flow to all aspects of social and economic life as the proportion of older people in the community increases.*¹⁴

Further, Elizabeth MacKinlay reports in her article "An Ageing Church in the 21st Century" that projections within Australia indicate that older people will increasingly be living alone, and thus in need of more support.¹⁵ Recent statistics indicate that in Australia approximately only 8% of persons 65 years and over reside in Nursing Homes, primarily because they would prefer to "age in place" with community support, than move into an aged care facility.¹⁶

Given that the Church is part of society, it can be speculated with reasonable accuracy that the comments and figures quoted above are indicative of trends within the Church. However, evidence suggests that Churches are significantly behind other organisations and institutions in responding to the increased numbers of older persons in society. Richard Griffin's claim in his article "Still Faithful After All These Years" that "Churches and synagogues [are]... asleep as the world around them ages" is representative of many people who are expressing concern over the Church's slow

¹³ Health Department of Western Australia, "Population Health in Perspective in Western Australia", 14 January 2005, <http://www.health.wa.gov.au/publications/documents/HO8.pdf>, 2 (accessed 19 August 2005). Also *ibid.*, "State Aged Care Plan for Western Australia 2003-2008", 27 June 2003, <http://www.health.wa.gov.au/publications/documents/SACP0308.pdf> (accessed 19 August 2005); Australian Bureau of Statistics, *op.cit.*; Larson, *op.cit.*, 19.

¹⁴ AIHW, *op.cit.*, 6.

¹⁵ Elizabeth MacKinlay, "An Ageing Church in the 21st Century", *St Mark's Review* 182 (Winter 2000), 3. AIHW statistics predict that between 1996 and 2006 there will be a 22% increase in older women (aged 65 and over) living alone, and a 35% in older men (AIHW, *op.cit.*, 15.)

¹⁶ *Idem.*

response to the ageing population and in recognising the potential opportunities available to it in adult ministry.¹⁷ This lack of attention by the church may be due, in part, to the absence of any discussion on religion and spirituality within gerontology in general. Historically gerontology has focussed more on a scientific understanding of the ageing process and it is only in relatively recent times that the pastoral and spiritual needs of older persons have been included. As such, it is clear that this area of research is at an embryonic stage and much more can be discovered with respect to the pastoral and spiritual needs, and care of, older persons.

Recognising this, in 2000 I undertook an original research project entitled *Spiritual “Which Way” For The Elderly? What is the Direction of Spiritual Care for the Elderly in the Anglican Church in Perth?* as part of a Masters in Theology degree at Murdoch University, Western Australia.¹⁸ This project identified that clergy and lay pastoral workers needed to be better equipped to recognise and respond to the pastoral and spiritual needs of older persons given the increasing number of older persons in society, and thus the Church. Further, between mid 2001 and mid 2003, I collaborated on a report commissioned by the Anglican Diocese of Perth and conducted by Anglican Homes (Incorporated). This survey was entitled *A Survey on Ministry with Older People Within the Diocese of Perth*, and one of the recommendations of the subsequent report passed at the Anglican Diocesan Synod in October 2003, was that:

*training (including an approach to the systematic evaluation of ministry to older persons) which complements existing opportunities and resources be developed to specifically address issues relating to older people.*¹⁹

The findings of my research project and the Anglican Homes/Diocesan survey are

¹⁷ Richard Griffin, "Still Faithful After All These Years", *U.S. Catholic* 62, No.10 (1997), 34.

¹⁸ Julie Barrett-Lennard, *Spiritual “Which Way” for the Elderly? What Is The Direction Of Spiritual Care For The Elderly In The Anglican Church In Perth?*, unpublished paper as part of Master of Theology degree, 2000. This degree was later converted to a Bachelor of Theology in order to enrol in the Research Masters(with training) postgraduate degree.

¹⁹ Anglican Homes (Incorporated), *A Survey on Ministry with Older People Within the Diocese of Perth*, May 2002.

supported by a wide range of literature becoming available both internationally and nationally that argues for more adequate training to be made available to Ministers and lay pastoral workers to better equip them to respond to the increasing ageing population and its affect on the Church. As will become evident in the Literature Review,²⁰ contemporary scholars are calling for this training to be a compulsory part of ministry formation for those preparing for ordained ministry.

Responding to the need for training within the Anglican Diocese of Perth, and a "systematic evaluation of ministry to older persons", the aim of this research was to undertake a qualitative and quantitative survey amongst clergy and lay pastoral care workers in the Anglican Diocese of Perth to:

- determine what training programmes are available within Western Australia to equip people to more effectively work with, or minister to, older persons
- gain specific information from participants on how best to provide training in the area of ministry to older persons, and elicit ideas on how the Church might best respond.
- gain an understanding of what clergy and lay pastoral care workers believed were some of the specific issues with respect to the pastoral and spiritual care of older persons.
- develop the basis of a training programme that will be sufficiently generic to be able to be adapted for use in various Churches, in aged care facilities, and in country regions.

The particular group of older persons considered for this research were those still in independent living.

²⁰ Chapter 2.4.

1.2 Terminology

Before exploring the content of the research further, it is important to first define some key words and phrases used throughout this thesis because terminology such as "pastoral", "spirituality", "religion" and "older persons" can have broad connotations, and possibly even different meanings. These terms were used in the research interviews for this paper, and are widely used by researchers and writers, and so clarification of their meaning within the context of this paper is essential in order to clarify how they have been used.

1.2.1 Pastoral (care)

The word 'pastoral' in the context of the Church is, according to *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, particularly associated with a "minister in charge of a church or congregation".²¹ More specifically, the Minister as "a shepherd of souls" has specific concerns for the spiritual care of his or her congregation.²² In *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, pastoral is defined as "a practical application of the Scriptures to the relationship between a minister of the gospel and the people for whose spiritual well-being he (sic) is responsible".²³ Thus pastoral care in a Church context is relational, with the initiative being with the Minister who has the overall responsibility for members of the congregation. Whilst the spiritual care of parishioners is the task of pastoral care, how that is effected can vary. For example, home visiting (with or without special reason), private counselling or guidance, responding to crises, and bereavement support are all ways in which pastoral care can be provided. Each of these areas of ministry has the potential for the Minister to draw upon the scriptures ("practical application") in his or her relationship

²¹ *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, Volume II (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 1525.

²² *Idem*.

²³ *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1974), 751.

with the person to whom they are ministering. Whilst each of these activities is concerned for the spiritual wellbeing of the person(s), I would argue that in fact any contact between Minister and parishioner also has a pastoral care component as a Minister should always be looking out for the overall care of those with whom they engage in any relationship, whether that be at Sunday worship or through marriage or baptism preparation..

With this brief overview of pastoral care in mind, the definition used in this paper is the one offered by George Everly in his article "'Pastoral Crisis Intervention': Toward a Definition". Everly defines pastoral care as:

*... the function of providing a spiritual, religious, or faith oriented leadership [that] is typically provided by someone (often ordained, but not always) who has been commissioned or otherwise selected by a faith-oriented group or other organization to provide interpersonal support, assistance in religious education, worship, sacraments, community organization, ethical-religious decision-making, and related activities of spiritual support.*²⁴

This definition has been chosen because it describes the many aspects to pastoral care, and identifies that persons providing pastoral care within a faith community are persons who have been identified by others with particular pastoral gifts.

However, a point of clarification is important. The survey undertaken for this thesis sought comments on the pastoral and spiritual needs of older persons. In this instance, pastoral was understood as more practical needs whereas spiritual was understood more in terms of a person's relationship with God, and perhaps the Church.

1.2.2 Spirituality

Definitions of spirituality (or spiritual) are limited only by the number of scholars and

²⁴ George Everly, "'Pastoral Crisis Intervention': Toward a Definition",

researchers attempting to offer some clarity, or a framework, for understanding these words. It is outside the parameters of this thesis to comprehensively critique the various ways of understanding spirituality. However, the spiritual needs of older persons are an integral part of this research, therefore it is important to briefly discuss some of the more recent understandings of spirituality, or spiritual, in order to explain the definition chosen for this paper. In his article “Gerontology, Spirituality, and Religion”, Siroj Sorajjakool defines spirituality as "an attempt to find meaning amid pain, suffering, aging and dying".²⁵ However, this definition suggests one can only discover and experience spirituality if one is in pain and suffering, and/or is old and dying, thus excluding people who are well and not old. As noted by Derrel Watkins in his article "A Practical Theology for Aging", a more inclusive definition was attempted by the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging in 1975:

*Spiritual well-being is the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community, and the environment that celebrates wholeness.*²⁶

Whilst this definition was widely used for many years by various faiths to formulate their individual understanding of spirituality, in contemporary western society there is an increasing recognition that one's spirituality may not be in relationship with God, thus limiting the number of persons who can identify with the NICA definition. More recent scholarship is endeavouring to define spirituality in a way that avoids restrictive terminology. For example, in his article “Beyond the Biomedical Paradigm: Generating A Spiritual Vision of Ageing” Melvin Kimble defines spirituality as “the energy within a person that strives for meaning and purpose that includes the experience of the transcendence and the mystery of the holy”.²⁷

<http://www.icisf.org/articles/Acrobat%20Documents/Pastoral%20Care/Pastoral%20Crisis%20int.html> (accessed 31 March 2005).

²⁵ Siroj Sorajjakool, *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 52, No.2 (Summer 1998), 147.

²⁶ Derrel R. Watkins, "A Practical Theology of Aging", in Derrel Watkins (ed), *Practical Theology for Aging* (New York: Haworth Pastoral Press, 2003), 35.

²⁷ Melvin Kimble, "Beyond the Biomedical Paradigm: Generating A Spiritual Vision of Ageing", abstract in Elizabeth MacKinlay (ed), *A booklet containing summaries of keynote addresses, some plenary sessions and various other papers delivered at the International Conference Ageing, Spirituality and Pastoral Care in the 21st century, Canberra, 21-25 January 2000* (ACT: Centre

These three representative examples demonstrate that no one definition of spirituality can succinctly capture the meaning of what is widely recognised as a complex concept. Recognising the limitations of any one definition, I have adopted for this research Sandra Schneiders' definition quoted by Laurence McNamara in his article "Theological Perspectives on Ageing and Mental Health":

[Spirituality is] the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms not of isolation and self-absorption but of self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives.²⁸

This definition has been chosen for two reasons. Firstly, the "self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives" can be understood by the Christian faith, the faith practised by the Anglican Church which is the focus of this research, as striving to live in relationship with God through Jesus Christ.²⁹ Secondly, because non Church older persons will be considered in this thesis, "the ultimate value one perceives" allows for those older persons who are striving to integrate often significant life changes in the context of their understanding of religion and spirituality.

1.2.3 Religion

The arguments surrounding a definition or description of religion are no less complex than those concerning spirituality. Although the interviews for this research focussed primarily on spiritual and pastoral issues of older persons, it is important to also clarify how religion is understood so that any reference to religion in this thesis is with the understanding it is a separate entity to spiritual or spirituality. This separation is in fact a matter of significant debate amongst scholars, with some arguing that it is a necessary separation and others arguing it is not possible to separate them. Those who argue for a separation do so primarily on the basis that religious practices do not

for Ageing and Pastoral Studies, 2000), 24.

²⁸ Laurence McNamara, "Theological Perspectives on Ageing and Mental Health", *Journal of Religious Gerontology* 13, No.3-4 (2002), 4.

necessarily express spirituality. In other words, one may attend Church and observe the religious practices of worship (external) but one may not be in a personal relationship with God (internal). It is the internal relationship with God that many people believe is the vehicle through which spirituality is expressed. Inner spirituality is not necessarily missing from observing religious practices, but as Eugene Bianchi argues in *Aging as a Spiritual Journey*, one can practise religiosity without any particular spiritual depth.³⁰ There is some evidence that suggests this separation between religion and spirituality is particularly valid in the lives of older persons. According to Sorajjakool for example, although religion is an important part of the ageing process, more important are “nonorganizational religious activities” such as private prayer and meditation.³¹ Elizabeth MacKinlay also argues in her article “Spirituality and Ageing: Bringing Meaning to Life” that the difference between formal religion and spirituality becomes more pronounced in later years as attendance at Church becomes less possible through limitations brought about by older age.³² In a survey MacKinlay conducted among nursing home residents, she found that the majority of residents prayed regularly although they were often unable to participate in formal religious services.³³ Advocates of the separation of religion and spirituality can find biblical support for their argument. For example, in both the Old and New Testaments people were challenged about observing religious practices without a loving heart toward God and their fellow human beings.³⁴

However, as was noted in an earlier paper by Barrett-Lennard, the distinction between

²⁹ The Christian faith believes in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

³⁰ Eugene Bianchi, *Aging as a Spiritual Journey* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 137.

³¹ Sorajjakool, op.cit., 151-153.

³² Elizabeth MacKinlay, “Spirituality and Ageing: Bringing Meaning to Life”, *St Mark’s Review* 155 (Spring 1993), 28.

³³ Idem.

³⁴ For example, Joel 2:12-13a; Hosea 6; Mark 7:6. All scripture verses quoted in this thesis are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the bible.

spirituality and religion is not shared by all researchers.³⁵ For example, in his article "Some Problems in Contemporary Christian Spirituality", Owen Thomas argues strongly that this distinction has created "serious confusions and misunderstandings" and has "lead to damaging results in contemporary spirituality".³⁶ Thomas believes that "spirituality and religion are practically synonymous" and that any separation of the inner life (spirituality) and the outer life (religion) is erroneous. He argues that all people are spiritual, although that spirituality can either enhance life or destroy life, and any separation of inner and outer life is philosophically, theologically and ethically incorrect.³⁷ Thomas argues against the separation of spirituality and religion because it implies the former has more importance over the latter, whereas he posits the outer life provides the main sources of the inner life.³⁸ Peter Coleman also questions the distinction between spirituality and religion in his article "Older People and Institutionalised Religion", concluding that if the Church community is based on interrelationships, then there is no conflict between spirituality and religion because the religious community provides the support and resources for one's individual spiritual journey.³⁹

Whilst all arguments may have a degree of persuasiveness, I support a separation of spirituality and religion on the basis of the significant contemporary evidence emerging that demonstrates older persons are discovering and embracing their spirituality but are not necessarily expressing that through formal religious practices. Therefore for the purpose of this paper, religion is to be understood as an:

Action or conduct indicating a belief in, reverence for, and desire to

³⁵ Barrett-Lennard, op.cit., 7.

³⁶ Owen C. Thomas, "Some Problems in Contemporary Christian Spirituality", *Anglican Theological Review* 82-2 (2000), 267-268.

³⁷ Ibid, 270.

³⁸ Idem.

³⁹ Peter G. Coleman, "Older People and Institutionalised Religion: Spiritual Questioning in Later Life", in Albert Jewell (ed), *Ageing, Spirituality and Well-being* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2004), 103 and 112.

*please, a divine ruling power; ... and the exercise or practice of rites or observances implying this.*⁴⁰

However, I acknowledge there is often a very close relationship between spirituality and religion, and that for many people religion often does provide the structure for spirituality, and for many people their religious practices are an expression of their spirituality.

1.2.4 Who is Old?

Historically, it would appear that not a lot of attention or thought has been given to identifying appropriate age groupings for older persons. Rather, evidence suggests all older people have been dumped "in the same hopper" as Mirian Dunson termed it in a 2000 edition of *The New York Times*.⁴¹ Support for this claim can be found in a number of studies over the past 55 years. For example, in 1950 when Erik Erikson proposed eight stages of life in his book *Childhood and Society*, old age was a continuum from aged 65.⁴² As a result, the varying needs in the different stages of later life were not identified in Erikson's study. In an attempt to isolate and acknowledge the changing needs of the older old age group, Bernice Neugarten suggested in the 1970s the age grouping of 65-75, 75-85,⁴³ but this grouping does not allow for the rapidly increasing 85 plus age group, especially the centenarians. In 1981 James Fowler drew on Erikson to develop seven stages of faith development in his book *Stages of Faith*, but he too nominated his final grouping from age 61 onward, thus categorising older persons as one group.⁴⁴ In the 1980s, a survey was conducted in America by the Religious Education Association, an organisation affiliated with

⁴⁰ *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, op.cit., 1788.

⁴¹ Cited in Winifred Gallagher, "Turning From the Workaday World to the Spirit's Concerns", *New York Times*, Late Edition (East Coast), Wednesday February 16 2000, H.10, <http://0-proquest.umi.com.prospero.murdoch.edu.au:80/pqdweb> (accessed 24 May 2005).

⁴² Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1950), 247-274.

⁴³ Cited in James W. Ellor, Jane M. Thibault, F. Ellen Netting, Catherine B. Carey, "Wholistic Theology as a Conceptual Foundation for Services for the Oldest Old", in James J. Seeber (ed), *Spiritual Maturity in the Later Years* (New York: Haworth, 1990), 101.

⁴⁴ James Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (Blackburn, Vic: Collins Dove, 1981), 319.

mainstream Churches which studied the relationship between religious faith and human development. However, as Frank Hutchison noted in his article "Coming to Grips with an Aging Church", the breakdown of age groups in this survey stopped at 50, thus implying all people over 50 have the same personal, spiritual and faith issues.⁴⁵ One attempt at correcting this anomaly of lumping all older people together was made by Andrew Becker in his book *Ministry With Older Persons: A Guide for Clergy and Congregations*.⁴⁶ He suggested breaking the human life span into three periods - the young old (65-73), middle old (73-80) and frail elderly (those living in nursing homes who require comprehensive medical care).⁴⁷ This has merit in that it recognises the needs of frail elderly, but it does assume everyone over 80 is frail and living in a high care nursing home. As recently as 1997, Harold Koenig and Andrew Weaver in their book *Counseling Troubled Older Adults*, defined "troubled older" as people 65 and over who are faced with a physical, emotional or spiritual difficulty (or perhaps all three), thus putting all older persons "in the same hopper".⁴⁸ All of these scholars have made a significant contribution to the understanding of human and faith development, but it is only in contemporary scholarship that older persons are being recognised as having different and specific needs at different stages of their later years, and that spiritually and personally people continue to grow until death. Thus it is clear that no one definition of ageing or older persons could ever be adequate. As Julie Gorman, concludes in her article "The Dilemma of Aging":

*...aging, aged, old, older are relative, ambiguous, imprecise and based on many variables.*⁴⁹

Therefore for the purposes of this research, and recognising the limitations of any

⁴⁵ Frank Hutchison, "Coming to Grips with an Aging Church", *The Christian Century* 106, No.6 (1989), 206.

⁴⁶ Andrew Becker, *Ministry With Older Persons: A Guide for Clergy and Congregations* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 36.

⁴⁷ Idem.

⁴⁸ Harold G. Koenig and Andrew J. Weaver, *Counseling Troubled Older Adults* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 15.

⁴⁹ Julie Gorman, "The Dilemma of Aging", in Watkins (ed), op.cit., 90.

categorising, two groups of older persons were identified. Those in the 60-75 age group are referred to as Young Old, and those in the 76+ age group Older Old. These two groupings do not imply that a person of 60, or 76, needs to consider themselves as old. The groupings are a construct to enable changes in a particular period of the life cycle to be more easily identified.

1.2.5 Church

References to the Church in this thesis refer to the Christian Church because the participants were selected from within the Anglican Church. However, I would posit that the ensuing discussion would be useful to other faiths and traditions because the issues and consequences of an ageing population are not exclusive to any one group in society.

1.3 Limitations/Boundaries of Thesis

As has been noted above, the area of pastoral and spiritual care of older persons is at an embryonic stage. Thus there is much scope for ongoing research. However, the focus of this paper is to ascertain how well the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Perth is responding to an ageing population. This population was chosen because of my involvement with, and specific interest in, the Anglican Church, and because of the ease with which participants could be interviewed given all participants were part of the Diocese of Perth. This research will exclude consideration of older persons suffering dementia because that in itself is a large research area and is currently being covered by specialists in dementia care. Further, gender distinctions will not be focussed upon because this area is at a very early stage of research and as such little information is available. This could also become a separate research topic.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Linda Foley et al began researching spirituality in older women in 1998 but concluded that further research is necessary to “examine the relationship of spirituality to wholeness and ultimate meaning in the lives of older women” (Linda Foley, Julie Wagner, Shirley A.Waskel, “Spirituality in the Lives of Older Women”, *Journal of Women & Aging* 10, No. 2 (1998), 85-91).

1.4 Summary of Chapter 1 and Structure of Thesis

This Chapter has highlighted evidence demonstrating that modern technology, medicine and a healthier lifestyle are enabling people to live at least 20-23 years longer than the previous average life span. As a result, there has been an “ageing explosion”, and it is predicted the number of older persons in western society will continue to rapidly increase as the baby boomers reach older age. However, evidence is also demonstrating that in general the Church is not fully alert to the impact this increased longevity will have on it, and in fact is already having. Nor is the Church fully cognisant of the potential opportunities in ministry to and by older persons. Thus the concern of this paper is to elucidate ways in which clergy and lay pastoral workers can be better equipped and trained to respond to the pastoral and spiritual needs of an ageing population. In order to do this, it will first be necessary to review current literature on contemporary views and other research in the area of the Church's pastoral and spiritual responses to the "ageing explosion", and what it may mean for a person to be older in western society today. This literature review will be covered in Chapter two. Chapter three will explain the methodology of the survey process. Chapter four will report on the results, and the subsequent analysis, of the survey responses. These will be further discussed and elaborated upon in chapter five. Chapter six will provide a structure for a training programme for clergy and lay pastoral workers that it is envisaged will be used as a basis for training within the Anglican Diocese of Perth. Chapter seven will summarise the key elements of the research findings, from which some conclusions will be drawn. Appendices are provided to support various aspects of this thesis. An extensive Bibliography, a Reference List of additional reading not cited, and a list of scholarly and other contributions made by the author of this research during the period of candidature, conclude this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

The Church should be proactive about providing specifically for older people. (Survey response)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Perceptions Of, and Attitudes Toward, Older Persons

Hutchison claimed in 1989 that there are "Far too many limiting and condescending stereotypes about aging" in existence.⁵¹ This stereotyping has included perceptions such as ageing being a "decline and a downward spiral into dependency" with the challenges of ageing being "reduced to a set of medical problems."⁵² Or as John Painter expressed it in his article "Outward Decay and Inward Renewal", older persons have been viewed as "past it", or "worthless".⁵³ Notwithstanding those for whom older age brings significant physical and emotional deterioration, contemporary scholars are advocating for the reversal of these negative perceptions of, and attitudes toward, older persons so that old age is no longer seen merely as a time of decline, and older persons are no longer seen purely as needy and dependent. Furthermore, older persons are being encouraged to find a place in society rather than feel they need to withdraw from it.

This more recent positive focus on ageing by scholars and gerontologists is in fact consistent with the experience of many older persons themselves. Their voices are now emerging and they are giving the strong message that they still have goals and aspirations and the ability and desire to take advantage of healthy later years to explore new learning, personal (and maybe spiritual) growth, and leisure activities. According to evidence gathered by scholars such as Kathleen Fischer, and discussed in her book

⁵¹ Hutchison, op.cit., 207.

⁵² McNamara, op.cit., 3. Also Griffin, op.cit., 33.

⁵³ John Painter, "Outward Decay and Inward Renewal: A Biblical Perspective on Aging and the Image of God", *Journal of Religious Gerontology* 12, No.3-4 (2001), 44.

Autumn Gospel: Women in the Second Half of Life, older persons are now viewing age as more of a "mental concept" rather than focussing on chronological years.⁵⁴ In other words, many older persons are preferring to approach ageing with the attitude "you are as old as you think you are, as old as you feel". The extension of that, suggests Fischer, is that how one views age is influenced by the way society's image of old is internalised.⁵⁵ That is, if an older person accepts society's negative stereotyping that old means useless, then that person will start to behave that way. This was reinforced by the late Pope John Paul II who, in a letter to the President of the Second World Assembly on Aging (Madrid 2002), commented that the self esteem of older persons is significantly affected by how family and society view them.⁵⁶ The reversal of this philosophy is that if society views older age positively, then older persons are also more likely to view ageing more positively. Based on this viewpoint, there is an incentive and a challenge for society, including the Church, to review its perceptions of, and attitudes toward, older persons. Moreover, this educative process needs to begin at an early age because according to research conducted by Yale University in 2002, attitudes toward ageing and older persons are formed at an early age.⁵⁷ This means that if a young person grows up amongst negative perceptions of, and attitudes toward, ageing and older persons then they may have difficulty changing such stereotyping.⁵⁸ Recognising this, scholars are strongly encouraging the Church to be proactive in taking the lead to reverse negativity towards older persons. By doing so, the Church could "revolutionize the way our entire society looks at aging", argues James Gambone in his article "Aging is Everybody's Business".⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Kathleen Fischer, *Autumn Gospel: Women in the Second Half of Life* (New York: Paulist, 1995), 13-14.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Anonymous, "Society Needs to Respect the Dignity of the Elderly", *The Pope Speaks* 47, No.6 (2002), 353.

⁵⁷ Cited in James Gambone, "Aging is Everybody's Business", *The Clergy Journal* 79, No.6 (2003), 15. This research was conducted with a sample of 600 diverse individuals aged 50 and over.

⁵⁸ Idem.

One of the reasons the Church can be a leader in reversing negative perceptions of, and attitudes toward, ageing is that a number of Churches have significantly high numbers of older persons. For example, according to the 2001 National Church Life Survey in Australia, 47% of those attending the Anglican Church nationally at the time of the Survey were aged 60 and over.⁶⁰ These Churches need to look positively upon this demographic and should not "equate being an elderly church and being a church in decline" challenged Janet Wood at a Uniting Church Adult Fellowship national gathering held in Adelaide, Australia in early 2004.⁶¹ Wood reminded her audience that "in the Old Testament, longevity was part of God's promise", therefore older people should be seen as a "splendid *gift*" to the Church.⁶² Although she was addressing the Uniting Church, her comments could well extend to other Churches. In Wood's opinion, ageism arises from the assumption that "there's that which is better – which is young – and that which is worse – which is old".⁶³ In a similar vein, Malcolm Goldsmith wrote in his article "The Stars Only Shine in the Night", of his sadness at hearing people say apologetically that their Churches are "full of old people", rather than affirming the "rich resources of experience, faith and time" that older persons could bring to a Church community.⁶⁴ Goldsmith argues that the contribution of older persons must never be underestimated, including the contribution of the housebound.⁶⁵ This is of particular significance in Australia where there is a growing number of persons living past the aged of 80, including centenarians, with a high proportion of them enjoying good health, remaining reasonably active, and many still intellectually

⁵⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁶⁰ National Church Life Survey, <http://www.ncls.org.au/default.aspx?docid=2557> (accessed 25 October 2005). This compares with 12.6% of the general adult population being 65 years of age and over (idem.). This percentage is second only to the Uniting Church (56%), although the Presbyterian Church is close to the Anglican Church with 45% of persons aged 60 and over. A full "Age Profile by Denomination" can be accessed at the aforementioned website.

⁶¹ *Western Impact* 24, No.5 (2004), 1 (a publication of the Western Australian Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia).

⁶² Idem.

⁶³ Idem. See also Ross Henry Larson "Aging Successfully: Is It All in the Mind?", *The Clergy Journal* 74, No.9 (1998), 27.

⁶⁴ Malcolm Goldsmith, "The Stars Only Shine in the Night", in Jewell (ed), op.cit., 38.

⁶⁵ Idem.

astute.⁶⁶ It would therefore seem that the Church can use its high numbers of older persons in a proactive and creative way to enhance Church growth rather than seeing a large number of older persons as detrimental to a vital Church life. Moreover, a consequence of adopting these new positive perceptions and attitudes is that older persons may feel more valued, which in turn may enhance their self esteem and dignity which is often eroded because of the negativity they experience towards them.

One of the common negative perception of older persons now being questioned is the belief that they are either not open, or are not able, to change. According to Jim Hughes who is quoted by Andy Butcher in "Retirees May Become Ministry Cutting Edge", this has led many Churches to negate the contribution of older persons in preference for the younger generation.⁶⁷ However, as other scholars such as Lucien Coleman and Derrel Watkins point out in "Live a Little Before You Die a Lot", many older persons have in fact experienced very significant changes throughout their lifetime.⁶⁸ For example, many of the Older Old would have experienced the introduction of sophisticated household appliances, television, fast cars and aeroplanes. The Young Old have experienced substantial changes in such things as technology, audio and visual recordings and medical equipment. Other major changes that have been, and continue to be, experienced by older persons are retirement, maybe death of spouse, children no longer at home and so on. Moreover, as Al Fasol points out in his article "Preaching to Senior Citizens", older persons must also live with a changed contemporary society through events such as the attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001 and other tragedies of significant proportion.⁶⁹ Fasol concludes that "the frame of

⁶⁶ Chapter 1.1. In the United States it is estimated there will be 1.3 million people aged 100 and over by 2050 (Larson, "There's Aging in Your Future", op.cit., 25).

⁶⁷ Cited in Andy Butcher, "Retirees May Become Ministry Cutting Edge", *Christianity Today* 41, No.7 (1997), 57.

⁶⁸ Lucien Coleman and Derrel R. Watkins, "Live a Little Before You Die a Lot: Creative Living in the Later Years", in Watkins (ed), op.cit., 188.

⁶⁹ Al Fasol, "Preaching to Senior Citizens", in *ibid.*, 151.

reference for senior citizens is indeed a large one".⁷⁰ It can thus be seen that change is not foreign to older persons and many have had to make significant adaptations to life over many years. It may be that the key to older persons responding more positively to change is for them to be helped to understand it, and be supported through it. Ursula King argues this in her article "The Dance of Life".⁷¹ King contends that everyone, including older persons, has the potential for continual learning and thus personal growth, but that this learning and growth is generally dependent upon outside stimulus and nurture.⁷² In other words, a positive external environment will better facilitate learning and personal growth (ie change). This argument therefore suggests that if the Church were to provide older persons with a stimulating, nurturing and positive environment in which to learn and grow, then change may be more easily accepted. That may not necessarily mean older persons will no longer look to the Church and its leaders to provide some degree of stability at a time when so much else in their life is changing. Rather, I believe what the argument is suggesting is that because older persons may have difficulty with some change, they should not be dismissed as being unable to change at all. That is, a response to some circumstances by an older person should not be considered "in the same hopper" as a response to other circumstances and the conclusion drawn that older persons cannot or will not change.

Often only small changes are necessitated to reverse negative perceptions of, and attitudes toward, older persons and yet the impact of those changes can be very significant. One change that may be easily made is to not collude with those who joke about being old, or with those who make comments that imply one should avoid being with older people. There have been, and remain, many people in society who dispel the myth that old age means ceasing to be active and/or of use or value. For example,

⁷⁰ Idem.

⁷¹ Ursula King, "The Dance of Life: Spirituality, Ageing and Human Flourishing", in Jewell (ed), op.cit, 135-136.

in his article "Still Burning", Martin Marty notes the active longevity of people like George Burns, Benjamin Franklin, Winston Churchill, Agatha Christie and Albert Schweitzer.⁷³ Biblically, there are examples in the New Testament of God working powerfully in the lives of older persons. The very old Elizabeth and Zechariah finally conceived (Luke 1:5-23), and the ageing Nicodemus was prepared to turn his life around and follow Jesus (John 3:1-15). Thus in God's eyes people do not lessen in worth, ability or holiness just because they age.⁷⁴ Therefore it is important to ensure that older people do not lessen in worth, ability or holiness in the eyes of the Church and its leaders. This can best be achieved by Church members not contributing to the use of negative language and/or imagery with respect to older age. Even the most well intentioned scholars can create negative perceptions of older persons with the language they use. For example, in her book *A Crown of Glory: A Biblical View of Aging*, Rachel Dulin argues strongly for involving older persons in ministry, and yet she uses terminology that suggests once a person becomes old, they have reached their limit:

*We have to realize that they [ie older persons] are not potential resources, but, rather, proven resources.*⁷⁵

It is my contention that older persons are both proven **and potential** resources. Proven in that they have accumulated many years of experience, knowledge, wisdom and stories, and potential because they can continue to offer to use their gifts in all manner of ways. This assertion is based on personal experiences and observations, and is supported by Mel Kimble who, in referring to Viktor Frankl's conceptual theory of logotherapy in his article "The Defiant Power of the Human Spirit: Mental Health in Later Life", argues that people have "both actuality and potentiality" no matter what

⁷² Idem.

⁷³ Martin E. Marty, "Still Burning", *The Christian Century* 119, No.3 (2002), 47. Griffin also acknowledges the work of John Kenneth Galbraith, who at 89, remained an active professor emeritus at Harvard University and continued in various leadership roles in economics, politics and education. Griffin particularly comments upon the surprise many people showed that someone of that age remained active and engaged in society (Griffin, op.cit., 33).

⁷⁴ Kimble, cited in Gambone, op.cit., 15.

⁷⁵ Rachel Dulin, *A Crown of Glory: A Biblical View of Aging* (New York: Paulist, 1988), 109.

stage or condition of life they are in.⁷⁶ The theological premise for his argument is the *Imago Dei*, that is, human beings are created in the image of God and that does not cease to be just because one ages and one may experience certain afflictions associated with ageing.⁷⁷ It is therefore important for scholars and the Church to be conscious of the language they use to ensure older persons are not misrepresented in any way.

This discussion has drawn attention to the need for society to reverse negative perceptions of, and attitudes toward, ageing and older persons. With a high proportion of Church membership in the Young Old and Older Old age demographic, the Church through its leaders has the potential to model to the rest of society ways in which negative stereotyping of older persons can be reversed.

2.2 The Role of the Church in the Lives of Older Persons

The ensuing discussion is not to imply that the Church has not had, or does not have, any effective ministry amongst older persons. Rather, the impetus of this discussion is to draw attention to, and address, some of the ways in which the Church might better respond to the contemporary issue of an increasing ageing population. One important role of the Church today, according to Kathleen Fischer in her book *Winter Grace*, is for Churches to redefine ministry to older persons so that they not only think in terms of ministry to older persons, but also in terms of ministry of and by older persons.⁷⁸ Fischer argues that Church members feel loved when their gifts are received, and therefore Churches must create opportunities for older persons to contribute if they wish. In so doing, the Churches provide the opportunity for older persons to feel loved and valued, and retain a sense of belonging. As a result, concludes Fischer, older

⁷⁶ Mel Kimble, "The Defiant Power of the Human Spirit: Mental Health in Later Life", in Elizabeth MacKinlay (ed), *Mental Health and Spirituality in Later Life* (New York: Haworth, 2002), 44.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 42-43.

⁷⁸ Kathleen Fischer, *Winter Grace: Spirituality and Aging*, (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998), 72.

persons will no longer feel "objects of pity or duty", or be recipients only of "sympathy and kindness". Instead, their need for "human recognition, welcome, and a sense of belonging" will be met.⁷⁹ In his book *The Sandwich Generation: Adult Children Caring for Aging Parents* Charles Roots also argues that where possible, older persons want to be active and involved in life, and therefore the role of the Church is to broaden its ministry to older persons to ensure these needs are met as best as possible.⁸⁰ A similar concept had previously been argued by Hutchison who suggested that the spiritual and pastoral care of older persons needs to result from older persons themselves being involved in the spiritual and pastoral care of the Church as a community.⁸¹ Taking some initiative to promote this approach, the late Pope John Paul II suggested that society and the Church needed to accept older persons as "partners in shared projects" rather than seeing them as always needing to be recipients of care.⁸² These comments indicate that there is clearly a role for the Church to look at ministry to older persons with "fresh eyes"⁸³ and see within this group of people the vast opportunities available for involvement in the faith community. Part of this challenge is to ensure older persons with some physical limitations are provided with opportunities for involvement that may not require excessive physical exertion. For example, some older persons may still be able to attend or lead bible studies or discussion groups, others may be able to make pastoral phone calls, whilst others may simply be able to pray for the Church and its people. Such opportunities would enable these older persons to retain a sense of worth, value and belonging by feeling they were partners in the life of the Church. This is not to advocate that one must still be active or able to contribute in order to be or feel valued. Rather, it is responding to the need of many older persons who still wish to contribute to, or be part of, a faith

⁷⁹ Idem.

⁸⁰ Charles R. Roots, *The Sandwich Generation: Adult Children Caring for Aging Parents* (New York: Garland, 1998), 77.

⁸¹ Hutchison, op.cit., 207.

⁸² Anonymous, op.cit., 352-353.

community. The need to belong and to be in relationship, and the subsequent benefits this brings to older persons, is further argued by scholars such as Nancy Ault in her article "Spirituality in the Workplace: Space to Dance and Grieve".⁸⁴ Ault claims that "...Christian spirituality is thoroughly relational", elaborating that the relationship is both with God, and with each other. She suggests that for a person to be able to continually grow spiritually, they need the support and nurture of a faith community.⁸⁵ Moreover, there is a theological mandate for all people to be included as equals in the Church community. For example, the Epistles teach that the body of Christ (the Church) is made up of different parts, all of whom are members of that body. As such, that body is weaker for the exclusion of any part of it, each part has an integral part to play, and all are invited to be participants in the Eucharistic community of the Christian faith.⁸⁶ There is also a strong emphasis in the Gospel of John of the importance of unity, especially Jesus' words in John 17:20-23 "That they may be one". Thus the gerontological implications of such theological paradigms are clearly evident. That is, the gifts of older Church members must be valued and used in order for a faith community to be fully the body of Christ.⁸⁷ These arguments demonstrate that there is clearly a role for the Church to provide a community within which the Older Old can be partners in the body of Christ and thus be given an opportunity to continually develop their faith and to nurture their relationship with God.

A phenomenon of contemporary society that is receiving widespread attention, and is being seen as a critical area of pastoral concern where the Church will have an increasing role to play, is the changing family dynamic. That is, there is increasing

⁸³ MacKinlay, "An Ageing Church", op.cit., 4.

⁸⁴ Nancy Ault, "Spirituality in the Workplace: Space to Dance and Grieve", *St Mark's Review* 183, (Spring 2000), 10-12.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁸⁶ Romans 12:4-6; 1 Corinthians 10:17, 12:12-25; Ephesians 3:6, 4:4, 16, 5:30; Colossians 2:19, 3:15. For a more comprehensive discussion on New Testament perspectives on aging, see Julie Barrett-Lennard, *Spirituality of Older Persons in the New Testament*, a paper written as part of an Independent Study Contract in New Testament Studies, Murdoch University, 2003.

recognition that the traditional nuclear family is extremely vulnerable because of the myriad of different relationships occurring in today's society. In his article "Aging in the Twenty-first Century", Ross Larson refers to the contemporary "complex puzzle of family" that is a result of single parents, unmarried parents, and mixed families.⁸⁸ Adding to the mix of family networks is the increase in third marriages, which in Australia have increased by 55% between 1989 and 2003.⁸⁹ Compared to 20 years ago, a child in contemporary Western Australia is more likely not to have siblings, and is more likely to live in a single parent home.⁹⁰ Even if the original parents are together, very often both are in paid employment as well as having family and domestic responsibilities. This new family dynamic often creates the situation where there is little time to care for ageing parents, including no time to provide transport to enable an older parent to get to Church, or time just to sit and chat, or read to them.⁹¹ These changes in family relationships have the potential to contribute to a greater sense of loneliness in older persons and a subsequent dependence upon non family structures for support. Adding to this dilemma is the recognised low fertility rate in industrialised nations which means that in time there will be fewer children to care for older parents.⁹² As a result, demographers are warning that the need to care for older persons is going to extend beyond the family because of the significant number of baby boomers living long lives who do not have a large number of children to care for them. Scholars such as Stephen Sapp in his article "To Learn, To Teach, To Care: Gerontology As It Should Be Practiced" are predicting that the combination of these factors will result in an "unprecedented great-grandparent boom".⁹³ Further, the

⁸⁷ Pherigo, op.cit., 78.

⁸⁸ Ross Henry Larson, "Aging in the Twenty-First Century", *The Clergy Journal*, 75, No.5 (March 1999), 32.

⁸⁹ "Third Time Lucky at the Altar", *The West Australian*, Saturday 30 July 2005, 3.

⁹⁰ Health Department of Western Australia, "Population Health", op.cit.

⁹¹ Bianchi, op.cit., 153; Also Drew Leder, "We Should Help Our Elders Age Gracefully", *U.S. Catholic* 60, No.4 (April 1995), 35.

⁹² Chapter 1.1.

⁹³ Stephen Sapp, "To Learn, To Teach, To Care: Gerontology As It Should Be Practiced – A Tribute to Barbara Pittard Payne Stancil", in Watkins (ed), op.cit., 12. Also Bianchi, op.cit., 153. Roots provides a useful expose of the various implications of this "sandwich generation", particularly within the spheres of medicine, social security and education (Roots, op.cit., 5-23).

children who are caring for older parents will, on average, themselves live longer than in the past and as such they too will eventually become more frail and in need of support. Sapp refers to this new scenario as a "club sandwich generation", meaning that several generations will live long enough to need care simultaneously.⁹⁴ As a result, scholars are foreshadowing that the role of the Church is going to become increasingly significant in the lives of this "club sandwich generation", that is the extended family of the older persons who will seek support because of the strain of caring for older parents within their own limited boundaries of time, emotional energy and financial resources.⁹⁵ One of the major implications of this for the Church and its leaders is that pastoral care programmes will be affected by the increasing number of older persons still in their own home who need pastoral and spiritual care and support. This is a role the Church would be wise to take seriously because it was clearly demonstrated in the Introduction that older persons are going to increasingly make up a high proportion of society, and by implication, the Church. The Older Old are particularly vulnerable to loneliness, especially interaction with friends and families as opposed to carers and other support workers who may visit them, because the loss of family and friends is often more pronounced in the very later years. Moreover, because of their age and related circumstances, they generally have less opportunity, and perhaps less of a desire, to make new friends. It is in circumstances such as these that the Church has a role to offer support, and maybe even hope, to these older persons by ensuring they remain part of the faith network, thus helping them to still feel part of a family.⁹⁶

There is one further important issue that is emerging with respect to the role of the

⁹⁴ Sapp, *op.cit.*, 12.

⁹⁵ Roots, *op.cit.*, 75.

⁹⁶ For example, Martha S. Bergen, "A Christian Education for the Spiritual Growth of Senior Adults", in Watkins (ed), *op.cit.*, 130; Oliver, "A Holistic Approach to Ministry", *op.cit.*, 7.

Church in the lives of older persons, and that is the changing dress code amongst some ministers. For example, within the Anglican Church the clergy traditionally always wore clerical attire, but today many Anglican clergy prefer to wear an open neck shirt, or a collar and tie, with maybe a cross somewhere to represent their office. However, many lay persons also wear casual attire, with a cross to represent their Christian faith. Rosalie Hudson raises this issue in her articles entitled "Death and Dying in a Nursing Home: Personhood, Palliation and Pastoral Care", when she comments that it is no longer easy to discern the identity of the clergy because they sometimes dress no differently to lay pastoral carers.⁹⁷ This has led to confusion in many older persons. Further, traditionally the Anglican clergyperson was male whereas today there are many female Anglican clergy (as there are in other denominations). I suggest many older persons would not easily associate a female with being a Minister, thus clear identification of that would be of value to them. Anecdotal evidence provided by Pearl McGill from her role as a Chaplain with Uniting Church Homes in Western Australia reinforces this need for clergy to be easily recognisable in the presence of older persons.⁹⁸ For those who may argue that being easily recognised is not necessary because some older persons would not remember afterwards who had visited, Sidney Callahan in his article "Growing Gray With Grace" reminds us of the importance of "the sacrament of the present moment".⁹⁹ That is, older persons are very often aware of the present and every opportunity needs to be taken to encounter older persons within that time. Thus it seems clear that if clergy wish to play a significant role in the lives of older persons, particularly the Older Old who may be losing mental and physical capabilities, they need to be easily recognisable amongst the many other visitors such as carers, medicos, and domestic help. This may present a difficult

⁹⁷ Rosalie Hudson, "Death and Dying in a Nursing Home: Personhood, Palliation and Pastoral Care", *St Mark's Review*, 182 (Winter 2000), 10.

⁹⁸ Pearl McGill has given permission to be quoted in this paper.

⁹⁹ Sidney Callahan, "Growing Gray with Grace: The Best is Yet to Be", *Commonweal* 121, No.10 (1994), 11.

challenge for some clergy who prefer not to wear clerical attire. However, if pastoral and spiritual care to older persons is to be taken seriously, then some of the more basic, but important, needs of older persons must be given serious consideration for that care to be as effective as possible.

These few examples demonstrate that the Church has, and will increasingly have, a significant role to play in the lives of older persons. Moreover, both the Church community and the older persons have the potential to benefit from the various roles being developed.

2.3 Evangelism to Non Church Older Persons

An area of Church outreach that is stimulating discussion amongst scholars is the role the Church has in the lives of older persons who have not had a significant association with the Church. Evidence is now demonstrating that many older persons who may not have previously been involved in a Church community, or had a particularly religious background, may in fact begin to seek pastoral and/or spiritual support in their later years. Some scholars are even predicting that this group has the potential to provide the "single largest unchurched evangelism opportunity".¹⁰⁰ In fact, in his article "A Holistic Approach to Ministry", David Oliver claims to be "perplexed" at the way evangelistic opportunities amongst older persons are ignored.¹⁰¹ There are a number of reasons why it is important for the Church to initiate contact with non church older persons. One reason is that it is recognised that many of the activities retirees first engage in soon lose their appeal and meaning. Therefore in an attempt to discover a deeper meaning in life, they turn to prayer and other spiritual practices.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Larson, "Aging in the Twenty-First Century", op.cit., 32.

¹⁰¹ David Oliver, "A Holistic Approach to Ministry", *Journal of Religious Gerontology* 12, No.2 (2001), 14.

¹⁰² Griffin, op.cit., 34.

Further, Kimble suggests that when one enters later life the issues of health and mortality become more prominent and often lead people to seek "a connection to something larger than ourselves".¹⁰³ Kimble quotes Thomas Moore:

*Growing old is one of the ways the soul nudges itself into attention to the spiritual aspect of life. The body's changes teach us about fate, time, nature, mortality and character. Aging forces us to decide what is important in life.*¹⁰⁴

These observations suggest there is an opportunity here for the Church to find a way of connecting with these older persons to reassure them that the Church can be part of their support network by providing guidance and counsel where secular institutions may not be able to (ie on spiritual/religious issues).

Another reason for the Church to engage in evangelism to older persons is the increasing evidence that spirituality and/or religion contribute positively to one's overall wellbeing. For example, the results of a recent Australian survey established that:

*People in some kind of organised religion or alternative spirituality ... are happier, more optimistic and more generous than atheists.*¹⁰⁵

One of the researchers, Dr John Bellamy concludes that "religion and spirituality appear to provide some anchors in life."¹⁰⁶ This is consistent with a number of other recent Australian studies. For example, in his article "Depression: Dispirited or Spiritually Deprived?" Craig Hassed reports on research that links depression to a lack of religiosity.¹⁰⁷ One of the contributing factors to this

¹⁰³ Kimble, in MacKinlay (ed), *Mental Health and Spirituality*, op.cit., 41.

¹⁰⁴ Idem.

¹⁰⁵ Melissa Kent, "Be Spiritual, Be Happy", *The West Australian*, Wednesday December 15, 2004, 48. Similarly, studies quoted by Larson conclude that a "positive spirituality, good attitude, and good health all go hand in hand" (Larson, "Aging in the Twenty-First Century", op.cit., 32).

¹⁰⁶ Kent, op.cit., 48.

¹⁰⁷ Craig S. Hassed, "Depression: Dispirited or Spiritually Deprived?", *Medical Journal of Australia*, 173, 2000, 545. An article published on the internet by *The Medical Journal of Australia*, <http://www.mja.com.au> (accessed 25 June 2005). Other reasons Hassed gives why religiosity contributes to an overall sense of wellbeing are "the comfort that comes from believing in a

synergy that Hasted highlights is that a sense of "social connectedness" and its subsidiary benefits may be a contributing factor why people with a religious commitment do not suffer as much with depression, or if religious people do suffer with depression they recover more quickly than those without religious support.¹⁰⁸ Richard Fleming, in his article "Depression and Spirituality in Australian Aged Care Homes", also cites Australian evidence that demonstrates people involved in religion are less likely to suffer depression, and that suicide is less prevalent amongst those who attend Church.¹⁰⁹ The research from which Fleming's data came did appear to use religion and spirituality interchangeably, thus it cannot be easily determined whether all those survey participants were regular Church attenders or embraced a spirituality that was not connected to a religious body.¹¹⁰ However, despite some inconsistencies in terminology, evidence is strong that religion and/or spirituality reduce the incidences of depression. This is further borne out by another Australian study quoted by MacKinlay demonstrating that weekly 30 minute intentional pastoral care visits that nurtured the spiritual aspect, had a positive affect on older persons with depression. However, once those weekly visits that were part of the study were finished, the depression increased, thus suggesting that any spiritual and pastoral support to persons with depression needs to be regular and ongoing.¹¹¹ This Australian research on the relationship between mental health and religion and/or

benevolent and caring God", "the belief that justice will always ultimately triumph", and that "there is always a meaning behind life's difficulties".

¹⁰⁸ Idem.

¹⁰⁹ Richard Fleming, "Depression and Spirituality in Australian Aged Care Homes", in MacKinlay (ed), *Mental Health and Spirituality*, op.cit., 113. One of the studies cited by Fleming shows non Church people were four times more at risk of suicide than those who attended Church.

¹¹⁰ Notwithstanding such anomalies, I believe the debate surrounding the link between religion, spirituality and wellbeing reinforces the need to understand religion and spirituality as separate entities because many researchers seem to make that distinction.

¹¹¹ MacKinlay, in *Spirituality and Mental Health*, op.cit., 136. MacKinlay acknowledges the valuable contribution other treatment such as psychotherapy and medication can also offer older persons but argues pastoral care needs to be part of the total care package.

spirituality is consistent with other international research in this area.¹¹² Such is the credibility of all this research that some non religious gerontologists are starting to acknowledge that older people of faith live longer, recover more quickly from illness and surgery, and cope better with declining health. As a consequence, they are now including matters of spirituality and religion in their considerations.¹¹³ Furthermore, as Judy Skatssoon notes in her article "On Deeper Palpation: Prayer on Prescription", some medical institutions are now teaching student doctors to consider a patient's spiritual history along with their medical history.¹¹⁴ It is not being suggested that doctors become spiritual counsellors, rather that they be sufficiently informed as to be able to refer patients to appropriate Church support.¹¹⁵ As a result, many people who may not have had a previous strong link with a faith community may seek that if they believe religion can help their overall sense of wellbeing.

This evangelism to non church persons takes on even more impetus if Koenig et al are accurate in their claim in their article "Mental Health Care for Older Adults in the Year 2020", that baby boomers already suffer significantly from various emotional disorders, thus creating the likelihood that their need for support in this area will increase as they enter their later years.¹¹⁶ Koenig et al argue that because of various factors, the more traditional avenues of support for mental health problems are going to

¹¹² For example, Harold G. Koenig and Andrew J. Weaver, *Pastoral Care of Older Adults* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1998), 71-73; Harold G. Koenig, Linda K. George and Bercedis L. Peterson, "Religiosity and Remission of Depression in Medically Ill Older Patients", *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 155, No.4 (1998), 536. The authors acknowledge the various limitations of the study, explaining that the results should be used as generalisations only. They also acknowledge that for some people, depression actually makes it more difficult to use spiritual resources as a tool for coping with their illness, and this needs to be responded to appropriately.

¹¹³ Larson, "Aging in the Twenty-First Century", op.cit., 33.

¹¹⁴ Judy Skatssoon, "On Deeper Palpation: Prayer on Prescription", *Medical Observer*, 4 June 2004, 28. Skatssoon also points out that in the United States medical students are being taught to take a patient's spiritual history along with their medical history as a way of providing more wholistic medical care. This is in response to a study that established one third of Americans "include prayer in their medicine chest", with the majority of them claiming that prayer had been helpful in a range of medical conditions, including depression and chronic pain. However, Skatssoon notes that recent statistics show that a high proportion of doctors do not address this issue once in practice (Idem).

¹¹⁵ Idem.

¹¹⁶ Harold G. Koenig, Linda K. George, Robert Schneider, "Mental Health Care for Older Adults in the Year 2020: A Dangerous

decrease, thus more community type resources will be drawn upon. As such, they challenge the Church to "take the lead in grass-roots efforts to provide a community of support for elderly persons".¹¹⁷

Whilst the research on the benefits of religion/spirituality to mental health and overall wellbeing may be questioned by some researchers and scholars,¹¹⁸ there is enough convincing evidence to stimulate the Church into being proactive in its role of reaching out to non Church older persons to at least provide them with the opportunity to enhance their sense of wellbeing in their latter years. Some older persons may seek out the Church, but it may be that the Church needs to also seek them out and assure them that they are always welcome to explore the meaning and purpose of life, and/or what happens beyond death, within a faith community.

The area of evangelism to non Church older persons offers an additional benefit to that discussed above. That is, it can provide older persons within the Church with an opportunity to engage in ministry. It is believed that older persons may in fact be more effective than younger people in this ministry because non Church older persons are more likely to respond to someone in their own age demographic.¹¹⁹ By providing this opportunity, both the Church and the older persons have the potential to benefit. The benefit to the older persons providing the ministry is that it can nurture their self esteem and sense of worth by remaining actively involved and feeling they belong.¹²⁰ The benefit to the Church by older persons providing ministry to other older persons is they can make a significant contribution to the life of the Church. This concept adds

and Avoided Topic", *The Gerontologist* 34, No.5 (1994), 674.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 676-678.

¹¹⁸ For example, a study of adult development discussed by George E. Vaillant in *Aging Well: Surprising Guideposts to a Happier Life from the Landmark Harvard Study of Adult Development* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2002), 257-270.

¹¹⁹ Koenig, George and Schneider, op.cit., 676-678.

¹²⁰ Fischer, *Autumn Gospel*, op.cit., 17-19.

support to the late Pope John's suggestion of older persons being seen as partners in shared projects.¹²¹

Evangelism to non church older persons is a relatively new area of discussion but this brief overview of it demonstrates that it has potential to develop into an important area of ministry to and by older persons. This area would benefit from additional research in order to further explore the possibilities.

2.4 Inter-generational Relationships

Whilst acknowledging the limitations of Erikson classifying all older persons as 65 and over, he did identify that one of the social needs of older persons is to be inter-generational people. That is, with his theory of Generativity vs. Stagnation Erikson argued that older persons and younger persons need each other.¹²² In response to the increasing number of older persons in the Church, some contemporary scholars, and others who have an interest in enhancing the pastoral and spiritual care of older persons, are drawing on Erikson's theory and suggesting a model of being Church that is inter-generational. This model strives to connect younger and older members because of what each group can offer, and receive from, the other. The result is that the differences between the two groups are used creatively and positively rather than being seen as deterrents to inter-generational relationships occurring. Whilst the notion of inter-generational relationships is gaining support from scholars¹²³, evidence suggests the Church has not yet fully grasped this concept and the opportunities it provides. It was noted earlier that many scholars and gerontologists are accusing the Church of being asleep as the world around them ages. In his article "Church Family?

¹²¹ Chapter 2.1

¹²² Erikson, op.cit., 266-267.

¹²³ For example, the *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* was inaugurated in 2004 to enable scholarly discussion and shared information to be more accessible, <http://jir.ucsur.pitt.edu> (accessed 7 July 2005).

Intergenerational Tension in the Church", Adam Sparks is even more pessimistic about the Church with respect to it being aware of the opportunities and potential available to it through inter-generational relationships.¹²⁴ Sparks claims that the Church is "virtually in a coma" on this issue, and challenges it to reverse the trend evident in society where various age groups are segregated and "interdependence is being exchanged for independence". Whilst acknowledging there is no easy solution to reversing this trend, Sparks is critical of Churches that are practising the "niche" model of being community wherein separate Church services are offered for different age groups. He recognises that such a model is often successful in attracting high numbers, but he raises the question of whether Church as family, and as a true body of Christ, is being compromised. Sparks points out that separate services are not offered on a race, class or skin colour, and so raises the question why they should be offered on an age basis. He quotes Mark Ashton:

*Where a generation barrier appears in congregational life it must be resisted as stoutly as racism or snobbery. The idea of "youth churches" as a permanent expression of the Christian community's life is highly questionable. If we abandon the vision of a church without age barriers, we are discarding a part of the gospel, just as much as if we accepted there should be different churches for different classes, races or skin colours.*¹²⁵

Sparks further argues that biological families are comprised of a mixed group of people and by virtue of being family, learn how to relate, thus the Church needs to do likewise. In summary, Sparks argues that differences, particularly in age, need not equate to division but rather need to be worked through in a spirit of "sacrifice, tolerance, love, and respect for others".¹²⁶ Sparks is to be commended for his commitment to inter-generational relationships. However, there are some deficiencies in his "all inclusive" approach. For example, whilst families do indeed need to learn to

¹²⁴ Adam Sparks, "Church Family? Intergenerational Tension in the Church", *The Theologian*, The Internet Journal for Integrated Theology, http://www.geocities.com/the_theologian/content/pastoralia/intergenerational.html (accessed 8 July 2005).

¹²⁵ Idem.

¹²⁶ Idem.

relate and work together, they do not necessarily participate in all the same activities. For example, all family members may enjoy the movies but they may not see the same movie because of preferences influenced by age (amongst other things such as personality type, religious convictions). The analogy of this with the Church is that whilst all family members may wish to go to the Church, they may prefer a different style or time of worship because of preferences influenced by age, or level of teaching. That is not to argue against any inter-generational relationships occurring but rather is to acknowledge that there may be scope for some activities to be age specific and others to be inter-generational.

An alternative to worshipping together to promote inter-generational relationships is the idea of "spiritual friendships" suggested by Drew Christiansen in his article "A Catholic Perspective".¹²⁷ Christiansen raises the idea of "spiritual friendships" as a way of viewing inter-generational relationships. He argues that "spiritual friendships" can either be older persons sharing their wisdom and experience with younger people, or younger persons visiting older persons in their homes and allowing time to hear their stories and to pray with them, thus building up friendships.¹²⁸ Almost a decade after Christiansen's paper, Stanley Hauerwas and Laura Yordy develop Christiansen's concept further in their article "Captured in Time: Friendship and Aging".¹²⁹ They argue strongly for the importance and value of building friendship links both between older persons themselves, and between older and younger members of the Church. Moreover, they argue that the Church has a responsibility not to relieve older persons of their "moral responsibilities" but instead needs to encourage and nurture them into

¹²⁷ Drew Christiansen, "A Catholic Perspective", in Melvin A. Kimble, Susan H. McFadden, James W. Ellor, and James J. Seeber, (eds), *Aging, Spirituality, and Religion: A Handbook* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 412-413. Christiansen bases his concept on John 15:15 and Acts 2:42,46; 4:32 which he interprets as Christian communities being challenged to live with "one heart and soul", and cites examples of how this had been embraced in later centuries.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 413.

¹²⁹ Stanley Hauerwas and Laura Yordy, "Captured in Time: Friendship and Aging", in Stanley Hauerwas, Carole Bailey Stoneking, Keith G. Meador and David Cloutier (eds), *Growing Old in Christ* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003), 182.

influencing younger people and helping them to live well now so they will know how to live well when they too are old. Hauerwas and Yordy thus suggest that the Church must endeavour to discover ways of not isolating groups of people from each other based on age.¹³⁰ They claim creating inter-generational links is crucial if "we are to be the kinds of communities in which aging can be seen as an opportunity for a rich life of service".¹³¹

It was noted earlier that "the family" in contemporary western society is rapidly changing in its mix of relationships. Developing inter-generational relationships is one way being suggested to address some of the consequences of this new family dynamic. Various ways of achieving successful inter-generational relationships or friendships are being advocated, however, a couple of concepts are common amongst the emerging literature. One is the concept of older persons becoming surrogate grandparents to younger people – an "adopt a granny" concept. Barbara Bryson for example, cited in Mel Shipman's article "An Intergenerational Approach to Child Care", argues that in a caring and sharing environment:

*The seniors who have become involved feel that they are important, contributing members of society. Children, in turn, find that contact with their surrogate grandparents enriches their lives and introduces them to relationships that many of them don't have in their own family circles.*¹³²

This claim is supported by a recent report by Marissa Williams in *The West Australian* under the heading "A labour of love for a granny-for-hire".¹³³ Williams reported that grandparents as "cherished elders of the family" is a luxury no longer available to many young people in today's society because of the changed family dynamic. Aware

¹³⁰ Idem.

¹³¹ Ibid., 175.

¹³² Cited in Mel Shipman, "An Intergenerational Approach to Child Care: A Challenge During the International Year of Older Persons", *Canadian Child Care Federation*, http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/practice/programming/intergenerationalapproach_en.htm (accessed 7 July 2005).

¹³³ Marissa Williams, "A Labour of Love for a Granny-For-Hire", Health+Medicine insert, *The West Australian*, Wednesday, November 2, 2005, 2.

of these circumstances, the WA's School Volunteer Program established Mentoring Across Generations in Communities (MAGIC) whereby older persons volunteer to be mentors for younger people. Whilst the mentoring role took on many guises, one of the important ones was playing the role of grandparent to children who do not have easy, or any, access to a biological grandparent.¹³⁴ Commenting on the inter-generational benefits of this volunteer programme, Williams reported that:

*The children learnt seniors were not just "silly old people" and had skills to contribute, and the volunteers kept up to date with changing times.*¹³⁵

Whilst both Bryson's comments, and Williams report, are from a secular perspective, I would argue that they are equally applicable within the Church environment because as has already been noted, the Church is not immune from the influence of today's "complex puzzle" of family relationships.¹³⁶ Thus the concept of "adopt a granny" may well be of benefit within the Church as the idea has the potential to enhance both the life of the Church and individual Church members by each generation learning from the other. Furthermore, a more general mentoring role also has the potential to develop and nurture inter-generational relationships.¹³⁷ Some benefits of older persons being mentors are offered by Susan Pendleton Jones and L. Gregory Jones in their article "Worship, the Eucharist, Baptism, and Aging".¹³⁸ One is that older persons can make a significant contribution to children by nurturing them in their faith as they grow. This may be in addition to the support provided by parents, or may be in lieu of, if the parents are not Church attenders. This can include older persons mentoring young people preparing for Confirmation¹³⁹, thus passing on some of their wisdom and

¹³⁴ Idem. Other activities include painting, tiling, tap dancing, just spending time with young people chatting and listening to them.

¹³⁵ Idem.

¹³⁶ Chapter 2.2.

¹³⁷ A mentor, according to Fischer, is someone who has "walked before us on the path we want to take". It does not have to be a formal role and instead can involve the more informal role of a friend (Fischer, *Autumn Gospel*, op.cit., 163).

¹³⁸ Susan Pendleton Jones and L. Gregory Jones, "Worship, the Eucharist, Baptism, and Aging", in Hauerwas et al (eds), op.cit., 198-199. Jones and Jones do acknowledge that not all older persons are necessarily wise, but argue those who have faithfully served God all their lives have a lot to offer both the Church and young people.

¹³⁹ In the Anglican tradition, young people can be Confirmed (ie confirm the baptismal promises made on their behalf by parents

experience gained over their own lifetime.¹⁴⁰ The wisdom and experience of older persons can also be drawn upon to mentor and support young adults who may be struggling with issues such as marriage difficulties or child rearing. These mentoring opportunities not only benefit the younger people but also benefit the older persons because it provides them with an opportunity to contribute to the life of the Church. As Therese Lysaught concludes in her article "Memory, Funerals, and the Communion of Saints", if such inter-generational relationships and bonds can be forged within the Church, they have the potential to change society's attitude toward older persons by challenging the stereotypical image of them being only passive recipients of others' care.¹⁴¹

Another suggestion for developing inter-generational relationships within the Church is the idea of older persons sharing their memory – sharing their story – with those who will follow in the Church. Hauerwas and Yordy write:

*The Gospel is not some truth that can be known without memory – it is a story with lots of "subplots, intricacies, colours and textures" – stories live through memory, through being told over and over again and in the telling new aspects of the story are discovered.*¹⁴²

Hauerwas and Yordy thus claim that older persons are the "embodied memories" of the Church's story and this story, that is the Gospel message, must be passed on. They conclude that the church is dependent on those who can help it remember the complexity of story that makes up who we are.¹⁴³ The argument is not for the Church to live in the past and not change, or to expect there to be no conflicts and tensions when generations come together, but rather that the Church not over-compensate by

and Godparents) from age 16.

¹⁴⁰ Jones and Jones, op.cit., 199. Also Barbara Anne Keely, "Ministry With Older Persons", *The Clergy Journal* 75, No.4 (Feb 1999), 43; McCarthy, in Hauerwas et al (eds), op.cit., 243.

¹⁴¹ M. Therese Lysaught, "Memory, Funerals, and the Communion of Saints: Growing Old and Practices of Remembering", in Hauerwas et al (eds), op.cit., 292-293.

¹⁴² Hauerwas and Yordy, in Hauerwas et al (eds), op.cit., 182. Also Fischer, *Winter Grace*, op.cit., 73.

¹⁴³ Hauerwas and Yordy, in Hauerwas et al (eds), op.cit., 179.

adopting contemporary society's attitude of individualism and self-sufficiency. Continuity and change are in fact not in conflict, argues David Matzko McCarthy in his article "Generational Conflict: Continuity and Change".¹⁴⁴ Instead, he suggests that if the memory and continuity of older persons is allowed to be part of change, "they will provide a vital resource for understanding change".¹⁴⁵ Based on evidence from research with younger people, Fischer claims that the sharing of stories by older persons is "one of the most important contributions" they can make to a Christian community.¹⁴⁶ She argues that younger people are in fact interested in the history of the Church and through the telling of the story, generations can be unified and a commonality in the faith journey discovered. Moreover, suggests Fischer, the often difficult earlier struggles experienced by older persons when they were younger can be a support and encouragement to current younger persons in their faith journey.¹⁴⁷ As Carl Dudley and Nancy Ammerman challenge in their book *Congregations in Transition*:

*Use your congregation's history as a resource for change, to explore together your past and to weave these facts, events, and stories together to explain the present and open new options for the future. Have fun ...*¹⁴⁸

According to Fischer the theological mandate for story telling is that the collective experiences of older persons through all of life's stages equip them to show others how to "trust God, to love ourselves, and to love other people".¹⁴⁹ This is a sound theology of ageing because it encompasses the key elements which are at the heart of the Gospel message, that is, to trust in God and to love our neighbour as ourselves (cf Matthew 22:37-40). This discussion on the potential benefits of sharing the Church's story

¹⁴⁴ David Matzko McCarthy, "Generational Conflict": Community and Change" (quoting U.S. Bureau of the Census 1984), in Hauerwas et al (eds), op.cit., 229 and 246.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Fischer, *Winter Grace*, op.cit., 73-74. Other examples of how older persons can contribute are as spiritual guides, grief support, liturgical leaders and as teachers (ibid., 72).

¹⁴⁷ Idem.

¹⁴⁸ Cited in Donald A. Luidens, "Church Market", *The Christian Century* 119, No.16 (2002), 29.

through inter-generational relationships presents the Church with a challenge to retain its historical importance whilst at the same time to seek new ways of being Church.

Fischer also offers a possible solution to the potential conflict and tension within inter-generational relationships:

*If young and old are to become an interdependent community, each will have to let go and die in some ways in order that the new community may come to life.*¹⁵⁰

Ways in which this might happen are for older adults to resist the temptation to tell their middle-aged children how to live, to insist the children do things the way they always did, to let go of any fear, resentment or envy of younger people, and particularly to let go of any pre-suppositions they may have of younger people. On the other hand younger people (any age before 60) can also let go of things such as the need for speed and efficiency. They can also learn to be patient if they hear an older person's story more than once, and can take into consideration the speed with which they talk when communicating with older persons. The younger of this young age group also need to let go of any pre-suppositions they may have of being older, such as the assumption older people may not know anything or do not have control over their lives.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, Fischer argues that the differences or disagreements that will inevitably arise in inter-generational relationships can facilitate growth and change rather than lead to divisions if each generation is open to accept and learn from the differences, and if each age group can receive and value the various gifts offered from others.¹⁵² These comments suggest that for inter-generational relationships to work as effectively as possible, it is important younger people embrace what older persons can

¹⁴⁹ Fischer, *Winter Grace*, op.cit., 18.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 78-79. The theological basis for Fischer's concept of letting go and dying to allow new life, is the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the goal of achieving an interdependent community as posited by the apostle St Paul in his biblical writings (eg 1 Corinthians 12:1-30; 14:1-12).

offer and older persons embrace the offering of younger persons. Whilst the latter group may not have the stories and depth of insight through years of varied experiences, they can offer a fresh look at life with vital energy that only young people can offer.

The above discussion has demonstrated that the concept of inter-generational relationships has support, although at times qualified, from many scholars and gerontologists. However, an important question to ask in this debate is to what degree younger persons are in fact interested in inter-generational relationships. Although Jones and Jones were able to demonstrate that some young people respond positively to mentoring by older persons, there is little other research that reports how well young people would respond to being mentored by older persons. Conscious of the lack of information, survey participants in this research were asked how well they believed inter-generational activities and relationships would actually work from a young person's point of view, particularly teenagers. Their comments are summarised in Chapter 4.10, and discussed in Chapter 5.5.

2.5 The Need for Training of Clergy and Lay Pastoral Workers

It is evident from contemporary literature that many scholars and others with an interest in gerontology are united, albeit perhaps unintentionally, in their call for the Church to be more aware of, and thus more responsive to, the opportunities available in ministry to and by older persons. The most common solution amongst scholars to this suggested apathy of Church leaders is to provide clergy and lay pastoral workers with training that will equip them to recognise the specific needs of older persons, and for them to be aware of the enormous potential there is for involving older persons in

¹⁵² Ibid., 82.

Parish life. It is believed one of the significant benefits of specific training in the area of ministry to older persons is that it will facilitate greater confidence in Church leaders to relate to older persons. It is no longer appropriate for the Church (or anyone I would add) to approach aged care as simply a matter of being kind,¹⁵³ or as a matter of seeing older people as “objects of care and charity”.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, training may help reverse inaccurate perceptions of, and negative attitudes toward, the capabilities and needs of older persons.¹⁵⁵ This has the potential to significantly change the ethos of a faith community. For example, older persons would be seen as people who have the potential to keep learning and growing until their last breath rather than being treated with "forced courtesy and undue sweetness ... synthetic smiles and fabricated faces".¹⁵⁶ Moreover, if older persons are provided with opportunities to discover and develop their spiritual gifts, they may be more motivated and confident to provide ministry themselves. Thus ministry to older persons can lead to ministry by older persons, an opportunity that Koenig and Weaver describe as "the greatest ministry of their lives".¹⁵⁷

Given this increasing importance of the need for clergy to be trained in the area of ministry to older persons, it would seem appropriate that such training begin during seminary training or equivalent.¹⁵⁸ This would reinforce the importance of older persons to the Church and would better equip clergy at an early stage of their vocation to discover ways of drawing upon older persons to help sustain a vital Church community. As a consequence, Church life can begin to gather momentum rather than

¹⁵³ MacKinlay, "Spirituality and Ageing", op.cit., 30.

¹⁵⁴ Paul and Paul, op.cit., 139.

¹⁵⁵ Chapter 2.1.

¹⁵⁶ Oliver, op.cit., 7.

¹⁵⁷ Koenig and Weaver, *Pastoral Care*, op.cit., 60.

¹⁵⁸ Koenig and Weaver claim that although 30% of seminaries surveyed included some courses on caring for the elderly, pastors who were self educated had far more knowledge than their seminary counterparts in this area (Koenig and Weaver, *Counseling Troubled Older Adults*, op.cit., 18). Also James W. Ellor and Marie A. Bracki, "Assessment, Referral, and Networking", in Kimble et al (eds), op.cit., 148; Sapp, in Watkins (ed), op.cit., 13.

become, or remain, stagnant or in decline. Larson in fact predicts that in time Church leaders will **demand** training be available to better equip them to respond to the increasing number of older persons within society and the Church, and that prospective clergy will **demand** their seminaries to provide such training during formation.¹⁵⁹

The arguments for clergy training in the area of ministry to older persons are even more persuasive when the role of clergy in the lives of older persons is considered. For example, the changing family dynamic, and a decreasing birth rate¹⁶⁰ have the potential to significantly impact upon the Church by placing extra demands on clergy time. Already some statistics demonstrate that clergy are often the first person a Church member will contact for a variety of support needs.¹⁶¹ This is in contrast to 30 years ago when families were shown to be the most faithful caregivers to older persons, with Churches providing less pastoral care than secular organisations.¹⁶² This shows that there is a growing expectation by Church members, and maybe even the wider society, for a higher level of support from the Church than has perhaps previously been expected or required. The value of training is that clergy and lay pastoral workers can be better equipped to learn how to respond to this increasingly demanding ministry.

The role religion and/or spirituality can play in enabling positive mental health and general wellbeing was also highlighted earlier.¹⁶³ As a result, some scholars such as James Jones in his article "A Life-Cycle Approach to Ministry with the Aging", claim that Pastors and pastoral counsellors will need training not only in pastoral skills but

¹⁵⁹ Larson, "Aging in the Twenty-First Century", op.cit., 30-32.

¹⁶⁰ Chapter 2.2.

¹⁶¹ Sapp, in Watkins (ed), op.cit., 12-13; James W. Ellor and Robert B. Coates, "Ministry With the Elderly: Training Needs of Clergy", *Journal of Religious Gerontology* 12, No.2 (2001), 30.

¹⁶² Paul Steinke, "Nursing Home Retro", *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 52, No.4 (Winter 1998), 399.

¹⁶³ Chapter 2.3.

also in clinical skills in order to minister effectively to the ageing population.¹⁶⁴ However, whilst gaining some clinical insights are clearly important, it would be unwise for clergy to take on the role of a mental health specialist because this is a very specialised field requiring many years of study and practise. Instead, I believe the role of clergy and lay leaders is to be aware of mental health issues, to know how to appropriately refer, and to ensure regular pastoral and spiritual support is offered to a person and their family during the time of illness. Training would provide clergy and lay pastoral workers with relevant knowledge and skills to work within appropriate boundaries and would give them greater insight into when and how to refer people to appropriate specialist care.

This brief discussion has shown that clergy and lay pastoral workers need to be better equipped to know how best to respond to the complexities of older age, and learn how to incorporate the extra demands of an increasing number of older persons into the overall needs of a Parish and their own available time. Scholars are strongly urging that this training be included in the seminary programmes to educate and equip clergy as early as possible in this growing area of ministry. Larson in fact warns that any Church that does not engage in dialogue with respect to overall concerns of older persons within society will "risk becoming irrelevant".¹⁶⁵

2.6 Summary

Contemporary aged care literature reviewed in this chapter has demonstrated that many of the traditionally held perceptions of, and attitudes toward, older persons are no longer appropriate, and indeed no longer relevant. There is growing evidence that demonstrates many older persons are not in a "downward spiral into dependency", nor

¹⁶⁴ James P. Jones, "A Life-Cycle Approach to Ministry with the Aging", *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 53, No.3 (Fall 1999), 324.

are they "worthless" and so on. Rather, many people in their later years see this time as an opportunity to learn and to grow, and to have fun. As such, the Church with its percentage of older persons on a rapid ascent, has the potential to be proactive in leading the rest of society in reversing negative stereotyping of the later years. Responding more proactively, positively and creatively to ageing has the potential to significantly increase the role of the Church and its leaders with respect to older persons. A number of different ways this role can be manifested were highlighted in this Chapter. Evangelism amongst older persons who may not have had an explicit previous connection with the Church, but who may be seeking spiritual and pastoral support toward the end of their life, was seen as a relatively new and important area of outreach with which the Church needs to engage because of the potential benefits to both the Church and to the older persons themselves. The concept of encouraging and nurturing inter-generational relationships within a Church community is finding strong support from many scholars and others as a means of enhancing Church life and the lives of the individuals concerned. This Chapter provided suggestions on how inter-generational relationships can be fostered, and how tensions and conflict might be addressed. Given the various discussions in this Chapter on the important relationships between the Church and older persons, and the increasing role Church leaders are expected to play in the lives of older persons, it is perhaps not surprising that those who have a specific interest in gerontology and the pastoral and spiritual care of older persons, are calling for clergy and lay pastoral workers to be adequately trained in this area. Evidence suggests that this has not been a priority, or in some cases given any recognition, by the Church. Such training would both familiarise clergy and lay pastoral workers in the pastoral and spiritual needs of older persons, and equip them to better respond to those needs.

¹⁶⁵ Larson, "There's Aging in Your Future", *op.cit.*, 26.

Recognising these points, this research sought to determine how clergy and lay pastoral workers within the Anglican Diocese of Perth were responding to the ageing population and to determine their interest in training in this area. The methodology for this research is explained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Parishes that feel they're overloaded need to be challenged quite strongly in this area [of ministry to older persons], almost to the point of harassment. (Survey response)

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In order to gather material for this research, a qualitative and quantitative survey was undertaken that elicited comments from clergy and lay pastoral care workers within the Anglican Diocese of Perth with respect to how well they perceived this Diocese to be responding to the ageing population (Appendix 1). The information was collected through a survey that was conducted by the student researcher in person with each participant. The survey was qualitative in that it sought opinions and comments from its participants, and quantitative in that it also sought statistical data. The first stage of the survey component of the research involved writing a letter to the Anglican Archbishop of Perth requesting permission to contact a selection of Anglican Parish clergy and aged care Chaplains with respect to interviewing them in order to undertake the survey. This letter was copied to the Bishop of the Southern Region, the Bishop of the Northern Region, the Bishop of the Goldfields-Country Region, and the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Anglican Homes. This permission was subsequently granted.

3.2 Population

Subsequent to permission being received, an initial group of 44 potential participants was selected from surveys returned in response to the 2001 survey commissioned by the Anglican Diocese of Perth entitled *A Survey on Ministry with Older People Within the Diocese of Perth*. The surveys were used with permission of the collaborators of the survey. Parishes who particularly commented on training in the area of ministry to older persons were focussed upon in my research. Other participants were recruited

from Anglican Parish Clergy, Anglican Chaplains within aged care facilities, and Anglican lay pastoral workers providing ministry within aged care if the clergy suggested their involvement might be useful. The participants were restricted to the Anglican Diocese of Perth because to include other denominations and other Dioceses would have created too wide a group for a Research Masters(with training) thesis. However, the Anglican Diocese of Perth extends south to Esperance, east to Southern Cross and north to Leeman, thus providing the potential for representation from city, semi rural and country areas. As such, a demographic grouping was created whereby the Anglican Parishes within the metropolitan area were divided into central, north, south, west, east and hills regions. Country Parishes were divided into north, south, east, and west regions. From these groupings, a number of Parishes were randomly chosen, that is, they were simply selected from the list available with no specific criteria applied. A personally addressed letter was written to the clergyperson of each Parish explaining my research, and requesting a meeting to interview him/her for approximately one hour in order to collect information/data to assist my research (see Appendix 2).

3.3 Method

3.3.1 Step One

Included with the letter to participants inviting their participation was a Consent Form which they were asked to sign and return to the student researcher prior to any further contact being made with them with respect to an interview (Appendix 3). A return, stamped addressed envelope was included for this purpose. The participants were asked to indicate on the Consent Form whether they agreed to the interview being taped. Participants were also given the opportunity to indicate if they would like to receive a summary of the final research project. A deadline was given in the letter for

the Consent Forms to be returned. Those who did not respond by that deadline were followed up by email correspondence or letter to ascertain whether they wished to participate but had not yet returned the form, or whether they did not wish to participate at all. If the participants did not respond to the email or letter, they were considered uninterested parties and alternative participants were randomly chosen from the particular geographical area of the original participants. Again, no specific criteria was applied in selecting these participants, and the same procedure was followed as with the initial participants with respect to requesting an interview. The final number of participants was thirty, which represents approximately one third of the Parishes in the Diocese of Perth, and included the three Anglican Homes Chaplains.

3.3.2 Step Two

The co-operating participants were contacted by email or telephone to arrange an interview time. A selection of questions that focussed on statistical data was sent to the participants, either by email or post, prior to the interview in order to provide them with an opportunity to collect that data in preparation for the interview if that was of value to the participant (eg number of older persons, number of housebound, percentage of ministry provided by older persons in the Parish). Participants were invited to choose the location where the interview would take place. In most cases this was either a Parish Office or Rectory living room. The interviewer travelled to the participant in all cases.

3.4 Survey Interviews

The survey used in the interviews comprised both closed and open questions. The closed questions focussed on gathering statistical data in order to create a picture of both the Church leader and the congregation with respect to the Church's response to the ageing population (eg training in ministry to older persons attended by clergy,

number of older persons in congregation, contribution of older persons). The open questions elicited personal perceptions of the participants with respect to a number of issues relating to ministry to older persons and the Church's pastoral and spiritual response to an ageing population.

There was one variation to the survey questions, and that is some of the questions to the then Director of Chaplaincy Services at Anglican Homes, Reverend Stuart Good, had a different focus to the standard survey questions (Appendix 4). This was because his role in aged care was more in leadership and training, and because he had been working with Anglican Homes for twenty years and thus had a significant amount of experience and knowledge. As such, it was believed Reverend Good could provide the experience and perspective from which other survey responses could be measured. For example, because Reverend Good had been involved in providing training in ministry to older persons over many years, and had attended many training courses himself, it was expected he could identify such things as what the aims of that training were, how well he believed they had been achieved, and what he had found most helpful and least helpful about various training programmes. It was proposed to combine Reverend Good's comments with responses from the other participants when structuring the outline of a training programme as part of this research. That is, the participants commented on what they believed was needed with respect to training, and Reverend Good commented on his experience of providing and attending training. Although some of the questions Reverend Good was asked were the same as other participants (for example discerning the spiritual and pastoral needs of older persons), his responses were kept separate in the event it became useful to compare his comments and other participants when discussing survey results. In other words, given his extensive experience and knowledge in ministry to older persons, it was proposed to at

times use Reverend Good's comments as a guide when analysing the responses by other participants.¹⁶⁶ Reverend Good has given permission for his comments from the survey questionnaire to be quoted, and for him to be identified, in this thesis.

As a result of isolating Reverend Good's responses, the survey results are calculated on responses from 29 participants, unless otherwise stated.

Only one participant did not agree to the interview being taped. The interviews were subsequently summarised in a document that allowed for comprehensive analysis of the responses to the various questions. The results of this analysis follow in the next chapter.

All aspects of the research project, including the interview process, were approved by Murdoch University's Human Ethics Committee prior to the participants being contacted.

3.5 Summary

The information for this thesis was gathered from a qualitative and quantitative survey conducted in person by the student researcher amongst 30 randomly selected Anglican clergy and lay pastoral workers within the Anglican Diocese of Perth. Questions requiring statistical information were sent to the participants by email or post prior to the interview in order to allow them time to gather the information. The participants were asked both closed and open questions depending on what information was required (ie statistical data or personal perceptions/comments). There was one exception to the standard survey questions because it was considered this participant

¹⁶⁶ Some of the comments made by Reverend Good will have future benefits if further research is undertaken to expand upon this

could provide a different perspective to the Church's response to the ageing population because of his extensive knowledge of, and experience in, this area. The interviews were taped, except one where the participant did not agree to this. The survey results were subsequently analysed by the student researcher. A summary of that analysis follows in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER FOUR

We underestimate older people and their value to the community and we underestimate them to our cost. (Survey response)

4. RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of the survey are presented.

4.1 Training Available in Western Australia and Who Knows About It

As was noted in the Introduction, one of the aims of this research was to determine what training programmes are available within Western Australian with respect to better equipping people to work with older persons. At the time of finalising the survey questions (May 2004), there were a number of training options available within Western Australia, and specifically the Anglican Diocese of Perth, with respect to older persons. However, an evaluation of this training revealed that it was limited, and not all of it considered the pastoral and spiritual needs of older persons. A summary of available training, and the responses by participants with respect to it, follow.

Technical and Further Education

The Technical and Further Education (TAFE) facility in Perth offered a Diploma of Community Services (Aged Care Work) up until 2004 when it became obsolete. Whilst it was available there were no modules within the Diploma structure that addressed the pastoral and spiritual needs of older persons. The modules focussed solely on topics that ensured the physical needs of older persons were understood and met, and that the administrative and financial aspects of managing an aged care facility were also understood.¹⁶⁷ TAFE has continued to offer two Certificates in Aged Care Work.¹⁶⁸ One is six months full time or 12-18 months part-time, and the other is one semester full time or equivalent part-time. In both Certificates the administrative

¹⁶⁷ Technical and Further Education, <http://psc23.central.tafe.wa.edu.au/> (accessed 30 March 2004).

¹⁶⁸ S274 Certificate III in Aged Care Work (CHC20102) and S280 Certificate IV in Aged Care Work (CHC40102), Technical and

aspects of aged care facilities, and the physical needs of older persons, are covered well. Almost thirty five percent (N=10) of participants had heard of the TAFE training, but none had completed it.

Dementia Care

The three day Dementia Care training course offered through the Anglican Homes Sir James McCusker Training Foundation was known to 31% (N=9) of survey participants, yet only 14% (N=4) had completed it. Of the four who had completed the course, three considered it very good, and one excellent. The training was considered particularly useful both in the information presented, and the stimulation it provided for further areas of enquiry. Although one participant suggested there could have been more interactive workshops, overall participants did not believe the training required significant improvement. However, it would seem this course needs to be better promoted given 69% (N=20) of participants had not heard of it.

Understanding the Spiritual Needs of Older Persons

Understanding the Spiritual Needs of Older Persons, also provided by Anglican Homes, was known by 38% (N=11) of survey participants, but only 3.5% (N=1) had completed it. This may be explained by the fact that these presentations by the then Director of Chaplaincy Services for Anglican Homes were provided only on request. For this training the Director adapted training literature available from the Methodist Homes for the Aged in the United Kingdom. The one participant who had completed this training considered it to be good, but commented it was particularly oriented to older persons who were sick. Thus there was scope for it to be broader and also consider those who were old, or were getting old, but were not sick.

Pastoral Assistants Training Days

The training offered by Anglican Homes through the Pastoral Assistants (PAs) training days was familiar to 55% (N=16) of participants, with 17% (N=5) having completed it. Given the majority of participants were clergy it could not be reasonably expected they participate in training for lay persons. However, some had participated prior to becoming a clergyperson, and some had participated by virtue of being involved in giving the training. Two participants considered the training very good, and three considered it excellent. The benefit most gained by participants who had completed the training was the general awareness it provided with respect to ministry to older persons. All five participants who had completed the training considered it right for the occasion, but added that more indepth training would be welcome. Although only a small percentage of participants had completed this training, it is important that 55% were aware of it because it means clergy can encourage their PAs to take advantage of it. However, the then Director of Chaplaincy Services reported that he and his colleague had only been invited to give one workshop with respect to ministry to older persons in recent years. This workshop was, by necessity, "pretty exhaustive" in that they endeavoured to cover as much as possible as a familiarisation exercise in a short amount of time. Thus it created an awareness only and did not allow for indepth learning with respect to ministry to older persons.

Ministering to Older People at Home, Church or in Residential Care

In response to a motion at the Anglican Synod in 2003, Anglican Homes constructed a training course entitled "Ministering to Older People at Home, Church or in Residential Care". This training, which was due to begin in May 2005, was aimed at clergy, ordinands,¹⁶⁹ Pastoral Assistants and other interested persons and was to be held for two hours on a Saturday afternoon for nine weeks. However, registrations for this

training were not sufficient for it to be held and it was subsequently cancelled.

Miscellaneous Training

Some participants had undertaken other training that encompassed aspects of ministry to older persons. For example, 14% (N=4) had attended workshops on death and dying, and 10% (N=3) had attended a conference hosted by the Australian based Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies (CAPS). Whilst feedback indicated the former had been very useful, its focus was specifically on those who were dying and related issues involving family and friends. Thus there was no component with respect to older persons who were not dying, or on the Church's response to an ageing population. The CAPS conferences were also considered helpful and were perhaps one forum where a wide range of issues relating to the Church and an ageing population were discussed. However, these conferences are held in various capital cities throughout Australia and are therefore not easily accessible to interested persons from Western Australia unless held in that State, or financial support to attend is available.

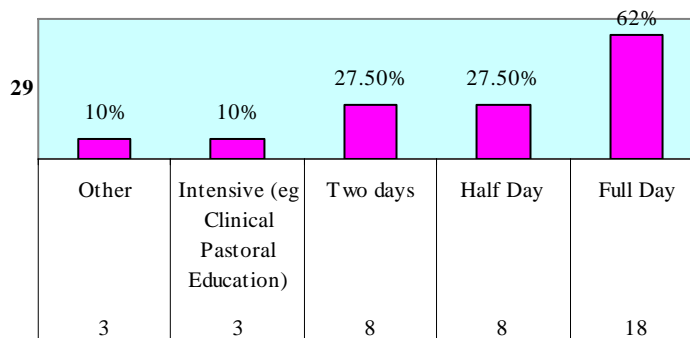
4.2 Preferred Duration and Time of Training

With respect to the preferred duration of training, 62% (N=18) of participants indicated they would prefer one full day of training. Of those, only 17% (N=3) preferred a Saturday, with 83% (N=15) preferring a week day. Some of these participants indicated they would attend a series of one day training workshops over a few weeks or months, with one participant explaining that would allow time to think about and digest what was learnt at each session before learning something new. A number of participants indicated they preferred one full day because it was more time efficient to allocate one whole day to an event than to allocate smaller amounts of time. This was

¹⁶⁹ Those in training for ordained ministry.

particularly so for semi-rural and country participants who believed it was not cost or time efficient to travel a long way for a short period of time, especially if that had to be on a regular basis. Other participants preferred one full day because more could be covered in one full day than in a shorter period of time. Whilst half day training was supported by 27.5% (N=8) of participants, it was the primary choice for only 10% (N=3), the balance indicating it would be possible but that one full day was first choice. Although an equal number (27.5% [N=8]) indicated two whole days would be possible, it was the first choice for only 21%, with the balance also indicating one full week day or a half day preference. Options listed under "Other" were evening, 3-4 days, and one week. The graph below summarises responses to this question.¹⁷⁰

Figure 4.2.1: Preferred Training Times



Responses to this question clearly indicate that any future training needs to consider the preferences of clergy and lay persons themselves, which, based on responses to this research, is one full week day. There was some support for one day a week over a period of time.

4.3 Considerations for Future Training Programmes

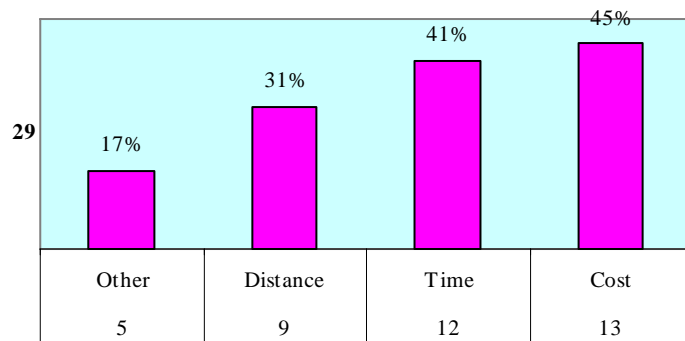
Responses to the question of whether participants would welcome specific training in the area of ministry to older persons reflected an overwhelming need in this area.

¹⁷⁰ I am grateful to Ms Kate Ryan, the former Personal Assistant to the Bishop of the Goldfields-Country Region, for her assistance

Eighty five percent (N=22) of clergy participants indicated they had no specific training in this area during their formation for ordained ministry. Not all participants responded to the question of whether they would have liked to have had such training, but of the 19 who did, 95% (N=18) indicated they would have liked it. All participants who had had some training in preparation for ordination (15% [N=4]) indicated they had found it useful in later ministry to older persons.

As noted in 4.1, one full day was the preferred option for the majority of participants. However, for both clergy and lay participants some factors were identified that would determine their availability for, and interest in, any training. As Figure 4.3.1 below indicates, cost (45% [N=13]) and time (41% [N=12]) were the primary factors, with distance (31% [N=9]) and other factors (17% [N=5]) also being mentioned. Factors listed under "Other" were family commitments, how much advance notice was given for the training (two responses), whether the participant was convinced the training would be worth attending, and last minute commitments such as funerals.

Figure 4.3.1: Training Preventions



Many participants considered their role in the Parish very demanding on their time and indicated that whether or not they undertook any training would depend on other commitments. Adequate advance notice of training was mentioned as a key factor in addressing this. There is a correlation between time and distance in that if participants

in formulating the graphs in this Chapter.

had a long way to travel, then that would influence whether that extra travel time was available. Participants suggested time would be less of any issue if training was held locally, such as at Deanery gatherings,¹⁷¹ or in the country at a regional gathering. Forty eight percent (N=14) of participants indicated that time was a factor for them not undertaking any prior training.

Some participants commented that cost would be less of an issue if training was offered locally, but suggested it would remain a consideration for those in part-time positions. However, only 3.5% (N=1) of participants indicated cost had been a factor in not attending prior training. Similarly, participants suggested distance would be less of a factor if training was offered at a more local level, although it was a factor in only 17% (N=5) of participants not undertaking prior training.

4.4 Proportion of Older Persons in Parishes

As was noted in the Introduction, two groups of older persons were delineated for this study. The Young Old group consisted of people aged 60-75, and the Older Old group consisted of people aged 75 and over. As Figures 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 below indicate, there were significantly more parishioners in the Young Old group to the Older Old group. Therefore the groupings reflecting the various percentages are different for each group. Of the 27 parish participants interviewed (this question was not relevant to the Chaplains), the number of persons in the Young Old age group was as follows:

Figure 4.4.1: Number of Parishioners in Young Old Group (60-75 years)

| Percentage of Young Old in Congregation | Number of Parishes | Percentage of Respondents (Out of 27) |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Over 50 | 12 | 41 |
| 25-49 | 7 | 26 |
| Less than 25 | 8 | 30 |

The range of persons in the Young Old age group extended from 13% to 80%.

¹⁷¹ Deaneries are clusters of Churches in nearby localities.

The number of persons in the Older Old age group was as follows:

Figure 4.4.2: Number of Parishioners in Older Old Group (76+)

| Percentage of Older Old in Congregation | Number of Parishes | Percentage of Respondents (Out of 27) |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 30 | 4 | 15 |
| 20-29 | 6 | 22 |
| Less than 20 | 17 | 63 |

The range of persons in the Older Old age group extended from .5% to 45%.

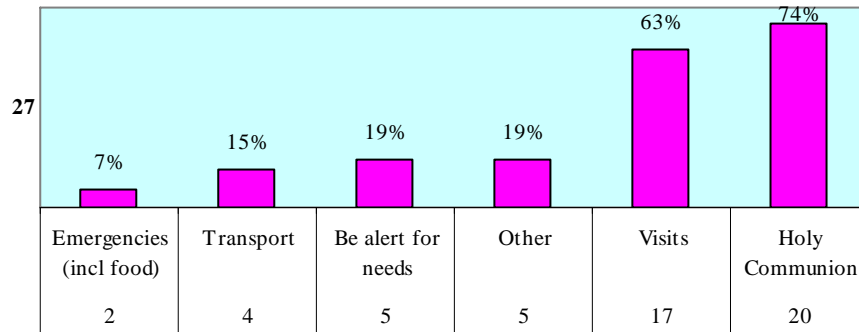
The percentage of housebound, or significantly housebound, older parishioners (60+) known to participants was very small. The average percentage across the representative Parishes was 5.6%, with a significant number of participants reporting less than 1% of older persons of whom they were aware were mostly housebound.

4.5 Ministry Provided to Housebound

Participants identified various forms of ministry to the housebound in an attempt to include them in the life of the parish. The most common was providing Holy Communion (74% [N=22]), with clergy and lay pastoral workers alternating in taking Communion to the housebound. Although receiving Holy Communion at home requires a visit, visitation was named as a separate ministry by 63% (N=17) participants. Clarification was not sought as to why this was so, however, it may be that taking Holy Communion to an older housebound person does not necessarily mean time is allowed to sit and chat, which is more the purpose of visiting. There were no other major areas of ministry to the housebound, although a range of important ministry was provided in various Parishes. As the graph below indicates these areas were transport (15% [N=4]), being alert to the needs of older persons such as key parishioners keeping in touch by telephone or simply being vigilant to possible needs (11% [N=3]), and providing emergency support (7% [N=2]). Included in "Other" were

emotional and spiritual support (although how this was provided was not elaborated upon by the participants), a monthly lunch, invitation of telephone calls if more contact needed than visiting provides, and occasional meals.

Figure 4.5.1: Ministry to Housebound



As can be seen from these results, offering the Sacraments (Holy Communion) is considered by participants as an important ministry to older persons. Visitation other than providing Holy Communion is also seen as important. Participants were not asked how often these ministries occurred, but from volunteered responses, it would seem the frequency of providing Holy Communion and visitation varies, ranging from weekly to monthly and both activities are shared between Clergy and lay pastoral workers.

4.6 Parish Ministry Provided By People Over 60

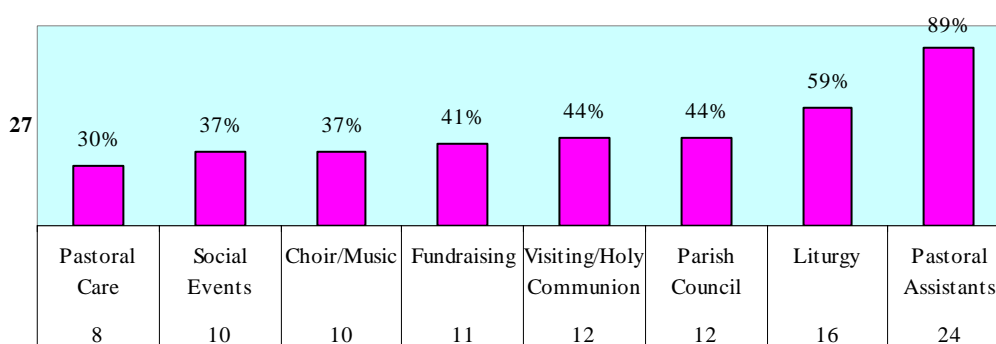
Responses to the question "What percentage of ministry is provided by people over 60 in your Parish?" demonstrate that persons in this age demographic continue to contribute significantly to the life of Parishes, and in a variety of ways. Figure 4.6.1 shows the percentage of ministry provided by people over 60 in Parishes.

Figure 4.6.1: Percentage of Parish Ministry Provided by People Over 60

| Percentage of Parish Ministry Provided by People Over 60 | Number of Parishes | Percentage of Respondents (Out of 27) |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 75 | 11 | 41 |
| 50-74 | 7 | 26 |
| 25-49 | 5 | 18 |
| Up to 25 | 4 | 15 |

This contribution by older persons comes in many different forms, although several areas of ministry were identified as the most common. As can be seen in Figure 4.6.2 below, the role of Pastoral Assistant rated very highly (89% [N=24]), with liturgy also rating high (59% [N=16]). Involvement in Visiting (41% [N=12]), Parish Council (41% [N=12]), Fundraising (41% [N=11]), Choir/Music (37% [N=10]) and Social Events (37% [N=10]) were mentioned as frequent ways older persons contribute to Parish ministry. Some respondents to this question included Home Communion as a form of visiting, therefore Home Communion is not listed separately on this occasion. Pastoral Care did not rate particularly high as an area in itself (30% [N=8]), however it may be that pastoral care was recognised as inherent in various other forms of ministry such as the role of Pastoral Assistant, visiting/Holy Communion, and social events.

Figure 4.6.2: Parish Ministry By Persons Over 60



This graph reflects the significant contribution many older people make in terms of leadership through the ministry of PAs, liturgy (such as bible reading, intercessions and preaching), Parish Council, and visiting. This survey did not seek to determine the

reasons why older persons undertook the particular ministry roles they did.

4.7 Spiritual and Pastoral Needs of the Young Old (60-75)

The difficulty in identifying the spiritual and pastoral needs of older persons as separate needs became apparent in responses by the participants. Some particular needs that were identified were at times classified spiritual, sometimes pastoral, and at other times one response covered both categories. This underlines the fact that spiritual and pastoral needs are not mutually exclusive and are, at times, closely related. Thus it became necessary when summarising results, to at times merge identified needs. For example, the need to belong, and the need to be valued and accepted, were identified by some participants as spiritual needs, whilst for others they were considered pastoral needs. The overlaps weren't as common in the Young Old group as in the Older Old group. Three graphs are presented below. Figure 4.7.1 represents the spiritual needs of the Young Old, Figure 4.7.2 represents the pastoral needs, and 4.7.3 is a combination of the two in order to gain an overall view of the pastoral and spiritual needs of the Young Old as perceived by survey participants. The graph bars are presented in different colours so that when a particular need is perceived as spiritual by some, and pastoral by others, it is easier to identify that commonality in the Combined Needs. For example, the need to belong was perceived by some as a spiritual need, and by others as a pastoral need. It is therefore identified by an orange graph in Figures 4.7.1, 4.7.2 and 4.7.3.

Figure 4.7.1: Spiritual Needs of Young Old (60-75)

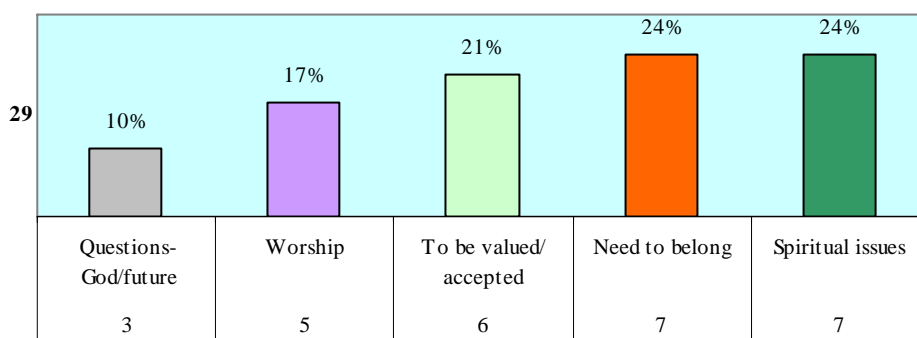


Figure 4.7.2: Pastoral Needs of Young Old (60-75)

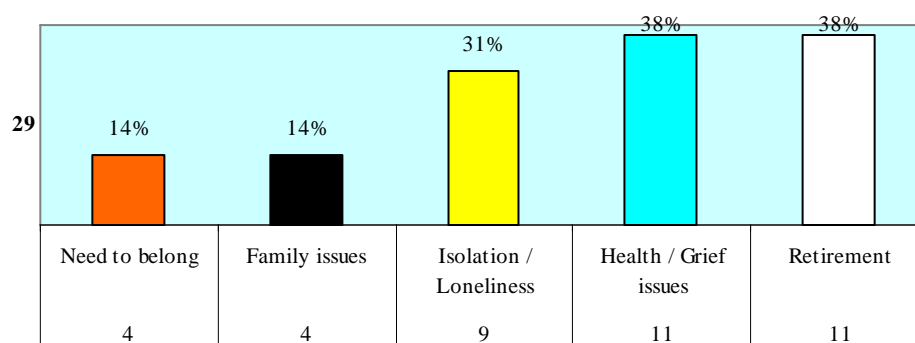
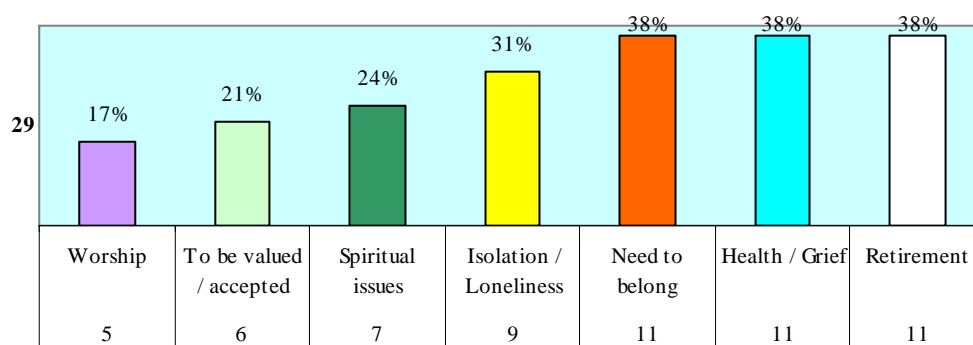


Figure 4.7.3: Combined Needs of Young Old (60-75)



These responses reflect an understanding by clergy and lay pastoral workers that the transition into retirement can have a major impact on people's lives. When mentioning health and grief as an issue for the Young Old, a number of participants connected this with the transition to retirement, the grief being through loss of status, identity, routine, regular and sometimes substantial income. Therefore if the two issues of retirement and loss are combined, they represent a significant issue for the Young Old. As can be

seen from Figure 4.7.3, the primary needs of the Young Old identified by participants are issues surrounding retirement, health and grief, the need to belong, and isolation/loneliness.

The issue of lack of support by children for older parents in the Young Old group was recognised by only 7% (N=2) of participants. Both these respondents considered it a pastoral issue.

In response to the question of how well their Parish or Chaplaincy was meeting or addressing the spiritual and pastoral needs of the Young Old, 17% [N=5] of participants commented they believed they were doing well. Thirty eight percent [11] considered they were not doing very well at all, or only fairly well. Other comments made that did not directly answer the question did reflect a concern that more could be done in this area. Perhaps indicative of these responses is a comment by one participant: "To me it's kind of the best we can do".

4.8 Spiritual and Pastoral Needs of the Older Old (76+)

Responses identifying the spiritual and pastoral needs of the Older Old reflect a different trend, as the graphs below illustrate. As with the Young Old, the graphs below are in different colours for ease of identification when the pastoral and spiritual needs are merged.

Figure 4.8.1: Spiritual Needs of Older Old (76+)

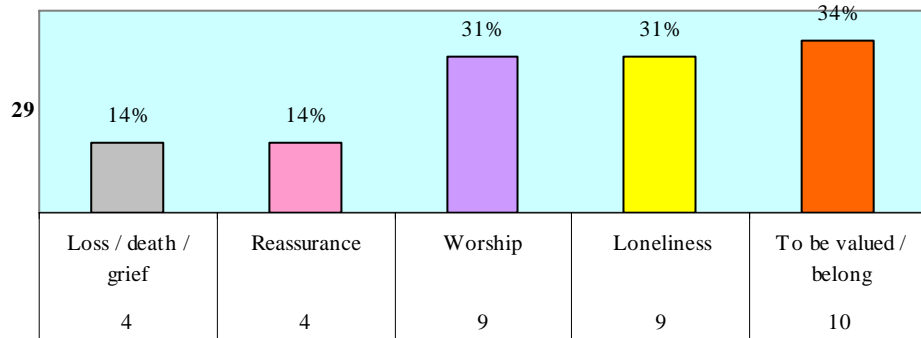


Figure 4.8.2: Pastoral Needs of Older Old (76+)

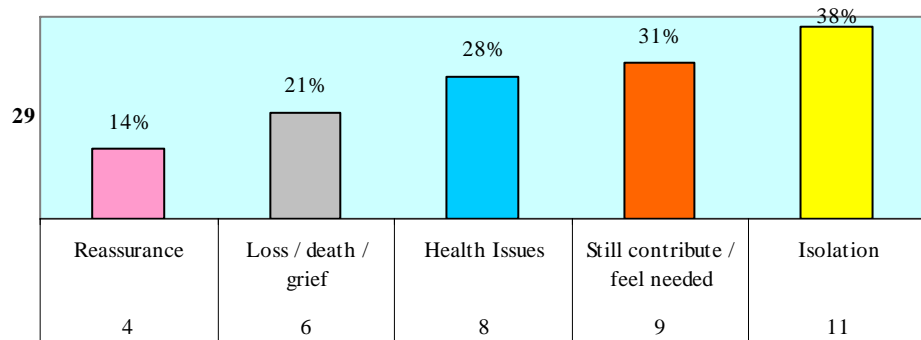


Figure 4.8.3: Combined Needs of Older Old (76+)

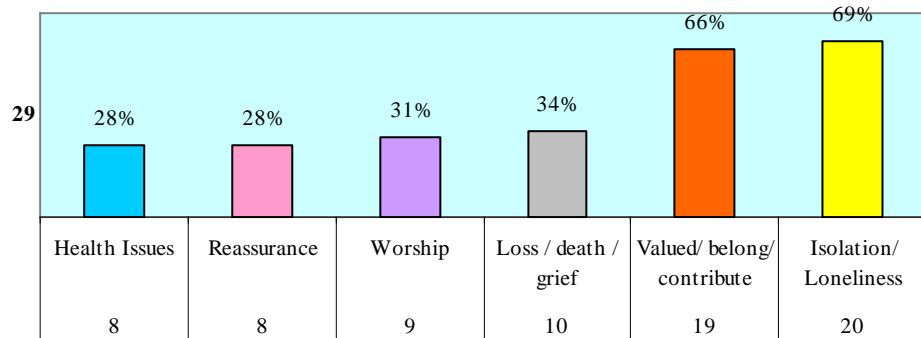


Figure 4.8.3 clearly demonstrates that, according to participants, the needs of older persons change significantly when they enter the Older Old group. The isolation and loneliness was sometimes seen by participants as a result of being disconnected from community events with which they were once involved, often intimately, including the Church. The sense of isolation and loneliness is a contributing factor to the understanding that the Older Old need to feel valued and need to feel they still belong

to the community, and are able to contribute in some way. Thus reassurance emerges as an issue for the Older Old, particularly the reassurance they are still considered part of the Church community and that their service of many years still matters to the life of the Church. According to survey participants, issues of death and dying become more significant for the Older Old, whereas it was not perceived as a significant issue for the Young Old.¹⁷²

As for the Young Old, the issue of lack of support by children for older parents in the Older Old group was recognised by only 7% (N=2) of participants, although for the latter group it was considered a pastoral issue by one participant, and a spiritual issue by the other.

Of the 25 participants who responded to the question of how well their Parish was meeting or addressing the spiritual and pastoral needs of the Older Old, 32% [N=8] believed they were doing well. Forty four percent [11] considered they were not doing very well at all, or only fairly well.

4.9 The "Wish Lists"

Participants were asked that if their Parish or Chaplaincy had unlimited financial or human resources, could they envisage ways of better meeting or addressing the spiritual and pastoral needs of older persons. Overall the responses were many and varied. However, some trends did emerge. For example, with respect to the Young Old, out of the 12 who answered the spiritual part of this question 75% [N=9] commented that providing a forum to enable this group to nurture and grow their spirituality was important.

¹⁷² Some scholars posit that it is not the fear of death itself that is the issue for older persons, but rather the circumstances of that

The most important pastoral need was providing what I categorise as "connecting occasions", that is, opportunities for people in this age group to meet together for fellowship and mutual support. Of the 23 who responded to this part of the question, 43.5% (N=10) saw these "connecting occasions" as pastorally important but lacked the resources to provide them. Also identified on the pastoral "wish list" was to provide training opportunities for people in this age group that encouraged them to use their time in some form of ministry within the Church. This was mentioned by 17% (N=4). Only 4% (N=1) included visiting in this category, but in the Older Old group, 45% (N=9) of the 20 who responded to this question indicated they would appreciate additional resources to enable more visiting to occur to meet the pastoral needs of the Older Old.

Across all 29 participants, 17% (N=5) commented that older persons have a large number and wide variety of community services available to them and that it was important the Church make use of, and liaise with, them when appropriate.

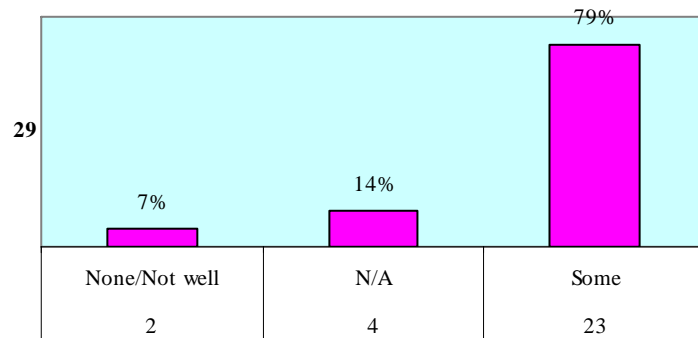
4.10 Inter-generational Relationships

Recognising the recent discussion with respect to older persons being inter-generational people (Chapter 2.5), survey participants were asked whether inter-generational relationships were already happening in their Parish (or in the case of the Chaplains, their Nursing Home environment), or if not, how did they envisage them being able to happen. Seventy nine percent (N=23) of participants indicated that inter-generational relationships were being fostered in some way. For 14% (N=4) of the participants, the question was not applicable as they did not have any younger people

death, eg James Birren, "Spiritual Maturity in Psychological Development", in Seeber (ed), op.cit., 50-51; Fischer, *Winter Grace*, op.cit., 163.

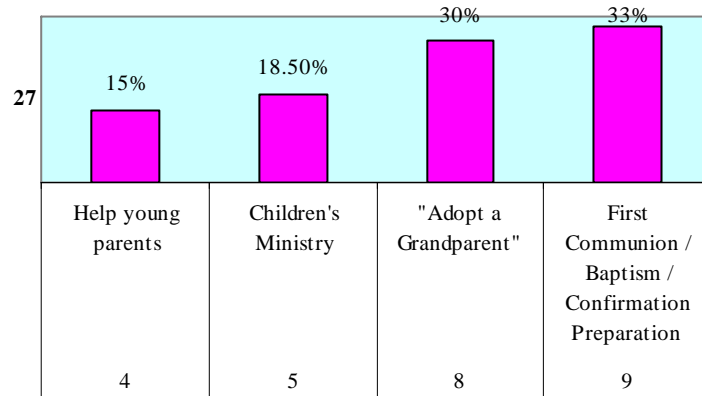
in their parish. Another 7% (N=2) believed it could be happening but wasn't, or wasn't happening very well. Figure 4.10.1 summarises these responses.

Figure 4.10.1: Occurrence of Inter-generational Activities



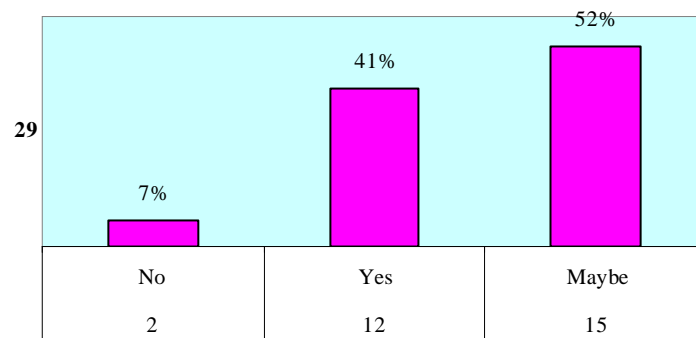
Whilst 79% is an encouraging indication of inter-generational relationships occurring, 38% (N=11) of the responses indicated that inter-generational activities were primarily the focus of special occasions (eg monthly Family Service, baptisms, Parish social events) rather than a regular part of Church community life. There were a number of inter-generational activities that were commonly identified by participants as already working well, or have the potential to work well if time was allocated to them. Thirty three percent [N=9] of the Parish participants indicated older persons were involved in preparing young people for First Communion, young adults for Confirmation, and parents for the baptism of their children. Thirty percent [N=8] indicated "Adopt a Grandparent" was already working, or had the potential to work, 18.5% [N=5] said older persons were involved in some form of children's ministry, and 15% [N=4] said older persons were providing important support to young parents. Figure 4.10.2 below summarises these responses.

Figure 4.10.2: Main Inter-generational Parish Activities



In response to the question of how well they believed inter-generational activities and relationships would actually work from a young person's point of view, particularly teenagers, 52% (N=15) of participants believed it may work for young people. In other words, the idea had potential but there were many variables that needed to be considered for it to work. Forty one percent (N=12) believed young people would respond positively to being mentored by older persons, whilst only 7% (N=2) believed it would not work.

Figure 4.10.3: Inter-generational Mentoring



Although some participants expressed caution with respect to a mentoring model, the positive responses in the above graph suggest that this initiative may have merit and may be worth pursuing in some instances.

4.11 Miscellaneous Responses

The last question participants were asked in the survey was if they wished to make any other comment about what had been previously discussed, or on any other issue relating to ministry to older persons. A large majority (69% [N=20]) made some reference to the importance of the Church responding more effectively to an increasing number of older persons in its midst. The following is a selection of comments made:

- Ministry to older persons should not be an "add on" but seen as a whole.
- It wasn't until I came here (current Parish) that I fully understood how little thought had been given to older adults – not only in Church but generally in the community – and how it's only going to become far, far more demanding as time goes on.
- One of the first things they wanted to hear from me when I came here was that I wasn't going to "toss them out" (new Priest in Parish).
- Not a matter of being kind to older people because there's going to be more of them – and we're going to be one of them – but their value is counted.
- Always allow time - part of the contact with the person – "you don't just waltz in there with a little service, and give communion, and then just waltz out" – has to be more than that.
- Diocese needs to establish good leadership in this area [appoint] a Diocesan link person, or aged care Chaplain for Parishes – or to Deaneries as another participant suggested.¹⁷³
- Church is on about ministry to youth and kids all the time, but biggest growth group is 55+.
- Must remember that older people are the backbone of the Church and we need to value that – not much recognition is given.
- You can trust older people.

¹⁷³ The Goldfields-Country Region of the Anglican Diocese of Perth is leading the way here with my appointment in 2004 as Chaplain to Health and Aged Care Facilities (Avon Deanery).

- My concern is, quite often we are dealing with people who have given their lives to the Church, been involved with the Church for decades and have sweated blood – and when they reach a point when not as visibly productive as perhaps once were, may be a sense not being cared for, valued, acknowledged, loved – half reason for that is people in Church too busy.
- Going to become a bigger issue as population ageing – Government agencies and facilities shrinking – Church's ability to pick up the slack is diminishing.
- Would be good if more training provided for ordinands in that areagoing to be an increasing pastoral area the treasures of old people – so much to give and relate and their experience of life.
- As ministers, we are treading on holy ground and we need to respect that.

Only one participant expressed strong negativity about the existence of older persons in the Church. This participant was of the opinion that "If anything killed the Church it would be the elderly people because they will drain you of everything you have and still be looking for more". By that the participant meant that in their loneliness and need to belong and feel valued, many older persons talk a lot, and that very often the conversation is only about their illness or a spouse's illness. The participant's perception was that no matter how much visiting is provided to these older persons, they will always want more. This participant saw their ministry to older persons in terms of what could be gained **from** it, which in this person's case was nothing. The participant further commented that they, and other clergy, felt that "Maybe we should be doing more but do not know if I've the energy to do it". However, despite some strong negative comments, this participant did demonstrate an awareness of some of the specific needs of both groups of older persons and ensured others in the Church were providing some ministry to older persons.

4.12 Summary

The survey results have demonstrated that appropriate and accessible training opportunities to better equip clergy and lay pastoral workers to respond to an ageing population, and to meet the spiritual and pastoral needs of older persons, are limited. The Certificate courses offered by TAFE provide, and have provided, important training in the physical care of older persons, and in the administrative and other responsibilities needed to work in this area, but do not address the spiritual or pastoral needs. Thus these Certificates would probably not be useful to ministers and lay pastoral workers. They also require a significant amount of time to complete, which would preclude clergy in particular who are only seeking short-term training. Survey responses suggest training offered by the Diocese of Perth through Anglican Homes and the Sir James McCusker Training Foundation has not been well accessed for various reasons. This may, in part, be due to the area of ministry to older persons only recently being recognised as an important area that needs particular focus. Statistics of older persons (aged 60 and over) in the Anglican Church within the Diocese of Perth highlight their increasing numbers. In many cases, the proportion of older persons was particularly high, one as high as 90%. However, the known percentage of housebound persons with whom the respective Churches had some contact was minimal. Ministry to this group was primarily Holy Communion and visiting. However, participants strongly indicated they would welcome specific training in this area, the preferred duration being clearly being one whole week day at easily accessible venues.

Survey responses suggest older persons contribute significantly in many Parishes, and in some instances provide the means for the Parish to keep operating effectively. This contribution is manifested in a variety of ways, but particularly through the role of Pastoral Assistant, leading or being involved in worship (liturgy), Parish Council, and

visiting.

The identified primary spiritual needs of the Young Old (60-75) were to continue to have opportunities provided for spiritual growth and support, to still belong, and to remain valued and accepted within the faith community. According to survey participants, pastorally this group requires support and understanding with respect to issues of retirement and the subsequent change in status and lifestyle, and in the changes in health that often start to occur in this age bracket. Participants suggested that these factors are indicative of why the Young Old begin to feel the impact of isolation and loneliness. The pastoral "wish list" for this group was strongly in support of more fellowship and support groups.

As older persons move into the Older Old age bracket (76+), spiritual and pastoral needs assume a different emphasis. Isolation and loneliness, and the need to be valued and to belong, become more pronounced according to responses by participants. Whilst some respondents saw these as spiritual needs and some as pastoral needs, the significant insight is that for a variety of reasons it is believed Older Old persons face increasing isolation and loneliness and thus have a correspondingly greater need to be valued and to feel they still belong to a Church community even though they are not able to always be physically present at worship or other activities. With greater human and financial resources, many participants indicated they would increase the amount, and quality, of visiting to this age group.

The issue of inter-generational relationships being fostered within the Anglican Church met with positive responses from participants. That is, a high percentage of respondents primarily saw the need to foster relationships between older members of

the Church (60+) and younger members. However, in many cases, inter-generational activities, including worship, were currently the focus of special occasions rather than a regular part of Church community life. With respect to how a younger person would respond to being mentored by an older person, a majority of participants indicated the idea had potential but that there many variables that needed to be considered for it to be effective. However, survey responses suggest this is a very worthwhile initiative to explore.

With this summary of the survey results, it is now possible to discuss in the next chapter the implications of some of these results, as well as the Church's pastoral responses to an ageing population, particularly where these responses might be improved.

CHAPTER FIVE

We say our children are the future of the Church, but at the same time the treasure of the Church rests in the hands of those who have given their all over so many years. (Survey response)

5. DISCUSSION

This discussion will draw upon key aspects from the previous chapters that are particularly relevant to this thesis and its ultimate aim of proposing a training programme for clergy and lay pastoral workers to better equip them to respond pastorally to the ageing population. It is important to note that what follows are not prescriptive comments for every older person as it is recognised each person's journey into later years is unique to their own circumstances and life's experiences. However, it is my contention that there are some general principles and guidelines that can be considered with respect to ministry to and by older persons which are important to highlight. As such, this chapter will focus upon six areas that emerged from the survey results as key factors in the pastoral care of older persons. These are specific ministry to Older Old persons, lifestyle transitions for the Young Old, the impact of change on older persons, evangelism to non Church older persons, inter-generational relationships, and the need for clergy and lay pastoral workers to be adequately trained in the area of ministry to older persons. In addition to these points, some further suggestions on how the Anglican Church can be more inclusive of older persons will be offered.

5.1 Ministry To and By the Older Old

As was indicated in the previous chapter,¹⁷⁴ participants identified loneliness and isolation as major issues for the Older Old. However, with the available human resources approximately only one third of participants believed their Parish was

¹⁷⁴ Figure 4.8.3.

addressing these needs of the Older Old, and many qualified that response by saying they were only doing it "quite well" which suggests a recognition more could be done. Almost half of the respondents suggested they were not doing very well at all, or only fairly well. These comments are reflected in the "wish lists" where participants expressed a desire to be able to do more visiting with the Older Old in their homes and to build bridges and make re-connections.¹⁷⁵ In the response, visiting was seen by some participants as a pastoral issue, and by some as a spiritual issue. Although participants did not define or clarify their understanding of pastoral and spiritual, it may be that it was considered a pastoral issue by some because they understood that by visiting an older person, they are actively striving not to separate anyone from the love of God¹⁷⁶, and understood as spiritual by others because they believed it gave them the opportunity to guide an older person to integrate their life "in terms not of isolation and self-absorption but of self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives".¹⁷⁷ Whether spiritual or pastoral, it is apparent from the survey responses that visiting was considered important by participants, but that their Parishes have limited human resources available to adequately cover this ministry area. Local Priests and Deacons¹⁷⁸ address the provision of clergy to some extent in the Goldfields-Country Region but these people are often too busy with their non clerical commitments to undertake a lot of additional pastoral care work such as visiting. This highlights that there is a real dichotomy between the recognition of some of the major needs of the Older Old, and the available human resources to meet them. However, this challenge cannot be ignored. As Reverend Good commented, "Visitation is as important, if not more important, than conducting services". Furthermore, he said, older persons should

¹⁷⁵ Chapter 4.9.

¹⁷⁶ See definition of pastoral care in Chapter 1.2.1.

¹⁷⁷ See definition of spirituality in Chapter 1.2.2.

¹⁷⁸ Local Priests and Deacons in the Anglican Diocese of Perth are people who have been ordained, after appropriate training, to provide ordained ministry within their local Parish. A condition of their role is they do not receive a stipend, although travelling expenses are often reimbursed.

not be "lost sight of", and suggested that all Parishes would benefit from a dedicated pastoral care worker whose primary role was to seek out and visit those who can no longer get to Church. This visiting need only be a friendly visit and does not necessarily have to involve Holy Communion. The important thing, said Reverend Good, is to "show friendship in the name of Christ". David Oliver in fact suggests in another of his articles entitled "Reflections on the Role of the Church", that if only one less active Church member fails to receive a regular visit from a Church representative, then even that is too many.¹⁷⁹

It may be that a way of addressing the gap between the need for more visiting and the lack of human resources to undertake it, is to provide training to clergy and lay pastoral workers in order to better equip them, and thus give them greater confidence, for that role. From my experience, many people feel uncertain about communicating with older persons, especially with those who may have limited ability to verbally respond. This often translates into either avoidance of older persons, or a brief visit to give Holy Communion with no time given to just sit and chat or listen. Anecdotal evidence suggests, however, that for many older persons human company is often one of the most comforting things that can be offered. As an older person struggling to come to terms with loneliness and isolation, Ellen Newton wrote in her book *This Bed My Centre* that visitors don't need to bring "things" – they just need to bring themselves.¹⁸⁰ The "self" is everything she wrote.¹⁸¹ From her experience, Newton believed what is most needed in caring for older persons are "warm perception, patience and special skills".¹⁸² Newton did not identify what she meant by "special

¹⁷⁹ David Oliver, "Reflections on the Role of the Church, Synagogue, or Parish in Developing Effective Ministries with Older Persons", *Journal of Religious Gerontology* 12, No.2 (2001), 40.

¹⁸⁰ Ellen Newton, *This Bed My Centre* (Melbourne: McPhee Gribble, 1979), 25.

¹⁸¹ Idem. Christiansen also comments that many older persons "desire companionship even more than physical care" (Christiansen, in Kimble et al (eds), op.cit., 413.

¹⁸² Newton, op.cit., 106.

skills", but Koenig and Coates suggest they include "one-to-one skill of counseling, empathy, and visitation".¹⁸³ With specific skills, ministry to older persons would not be just a "lick and a promise" as an older person once put it,¹⁸⁴ or a matter of providing "happy time travel clubs and potlucks",¹⁸⁵ or offering just a "whistle stop tour".¹⁸⁶

Some people are also deterred from visiting older persons because they feel the latter may not remember the visit. However, that is not a theologically sound approach or attitude, as Lysaught highlights in the following statement:

*Like God's remembering of us, our presence to the elderly as we remember them sustains them ...the reality of the communion of saints situates the elderly as equal partners in the body of Christ, without the elderly, the church is not complete.*¹⁸⁷

Lysaught poignantly concludes that the issue is not whether older persons can remember, but that they are "actively and concretely" remembered, especially by the Church community.¹⁸⁸ This reinforces Callahan's point noted in the Literature Review of not under-estimating the value of the present moment for older persons, particularly the Older Old whose cognitive abilities may have significantly deteriorated.¹⁸⁹

Maybe the words of one participant with respect to visiting older persons can be an encouragement to others to undertake more visiting:

I love it – I enjoy drawing people's stories out – giving people worth is often just listening to their stories – about the depression, war, family stuff – admiring their pets and remembering pet's name. We learn so much from them (older persons).

Alternatively, a comment made to a participant by an older grandmother may inspire

¹⁸³ Koenig and Coates, op.cit., 35.

¹⁸⁴ Steinke, op.cit., 400.

¹⁸⁵ Butcher, op.cit., 57.

¹⁸⁶ Comment by survey participant.

¹⁸⁷ Lysaught, in Hauerwas et al (eds), op.cit., 295.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 301.

more visitation:

One of the tragic things about getting really old is that you're left with no friends.

This particular comment reflects the concern expressed in the Literature Review that the Older Old are particularly vulnerable to loneliness because often their spouse and other close family and friends have died.¹⁹⁰ Although one participant cautioned;

Clergy need to learn not to fix it but just to acknowledge it (the loss) – and hear the pain involved with it (not put bandaids on it).

Whilst the importance of visiting has been reinforced, it is also important to acknowledge that some older persons may wish not to be visited, or are not very welcoming. That needs to be respected, but it may be that keeping in contact with these people every so often is a way of reminding them that the Church has not forgotten them and that someone would be available should they ever require some form of support.

The one participant who spoke negatively about older persons did in fact raise an important point of which pastoral visitors do need to be aware. And that is, how to respond to older persons who seem to demand a lot of time, and expect more visitation than is perhaps possible to provide. Koenig and Weaver offer one way of addressing this when they suggest that after an appropriate period of time during which the older person may express their various problems, including feelings of loneliness, the older person be encouraged to visit or telephone other older persons in the congregation who may be in a similar situation (ministry to older persons by older persons).¹⁹¹ It may be that part of the problem for these older persons is boredom. Newton alludes to this:

There's no love or thanks enough for Helen for all she is and has been to me.

¹⁸⁹ Chapter 2.2.

¹⁹⁰ Chapter 2.2.

¹⁹¹ Koenig and Weaver, *Pastoral Care*, op.cit., 66-67.

*And I'm not unmindful of those golden friends who still come to see me on days when I'm the worst of company. But this happy exchange is only for a couple of hours a day. **There are still all the other twenty or so tattered hours to be got through** (bold text mine).¹⁹²*

Newton's comment highlights that for many older persons there are a lot of empty hours in a day despite the best care family and friends can offer. Oliver has also observed more recently that many older persons who still have physical and mental capabilities are "trapped between the living room, bedroom, and kitchen twenty-four hours a day" and have "nothing to do tomorrow, or the next day, or the next".¹⁹³ It may be therefore that some older persons may welcome the opportunity to engage in passive ministry to help alleviate loneliness and boredom. Some of these opportunities were mentioned in the Literature Review.¹⁹⁴ In addition to telephoning or visiting as suggested by Koenig and Coates, older persons could send cards on behalf of the Parish for special occasions such as anniversaries, births, deaths.¹⁹⁵ However, if older persons are encouraged to undertake ministry such as telephoning or writing cards as a way of addressing their loneliness, the Church must ensure the older persons are not financially disadvantaged by undertaking such a role, or that they decline to undertake it because they cannot financially support it. One survey participant reported that a person in the Older Old age group has started an older women's network group (ministry to older persons by an older person). These examples of active and passive ministry to and by the Older Old illustrate the ongoing possibilities and potential available with older persons if they are encouraged in, and given opportunities for, ministry. A positive outcome for many Old Older persons is that it would help to address two of their major needs as identified in Figure 4.8.3. That is, the need to be

¹⁹² Newton, op.cit., 194.

¹⁹³ Oliver, "A Holistic Approach", op.cit., 12.

¹⁹⁴ Chapter 2.2.

¹⁹⁵ Coleman and Watkins cite an example of an older person with severe physical limitations because of a car accident who, at the time of writing, had posted over 6,000 cards to members of her Church and visitors to the Church. The older person claims this ministry has enabled her to continue to grow spiritually (Coleman and Watkins, in Watkins (ed), op.cit., 198).

valued/to belong/to contribute, and the issue of isolation and loneliness.¹⁹⁶ The potential benefit to the Church is that it can increase the human resources needed to undertake some of the ministry, and may help alleviate the demand for visitation sometimes expressed by the Older Old in particular because of their limiting circumstances.

This discussion has highlighted that notwithstanding some of the difficulties Churches face, providing adequate visiting is clearly an area of pastoral support that must remain in the forefront of Parish programmes in order to as best as possible respond to this need in the Older Old particularly. Specific training of clergy and lay pastoral workers in this area would give them greater confidence for the role, and enable them to better understand the needs of the Older Old. Moreover, if older persons can be encouraged to contribute to the life of the Parish, even in some small way, the demand for visiting may be lessened whilst the sense of wellbeing of the older persons may be enhanced.

5.2 Lifestyle Transitions of the Young Old

As was demonstrated in the Results chapter, retirement and the subsequent life changes were identified by participants as significant issues for the Young Old.¹⁹⁷ Retirement does, of course, impact on people differently and how people respond to retirement can often influence what impact that will have on the Church. That is, whether people approach retirement as a time to do very little, or a time to do new things and be kept busy with various activities. In contemporary western society, many people in their 50s either choose, or are forced, to take early retirement, and it is recognised that these people are often still very active with healthy intellectual acumen whether that be of an academic or non academic standard. As such, they are generally seeking ways to be

¹⁹⁶ This was reinforced by Reverend Good who had made this observation during his many years of ministry to older persons.

involved in some type of activity such as sport, a hobby or volunteer work. Recognising this, one survey participant suggested that the Church's response to those in this group should be to "catch them quickly". If not, these active people are likely to become more heavily involved in social and sporting clubs, the result of which may be a loss to the Church. This participant added that in fact if this group is not invited to be involved in the Church's activities within six months of their retirement, then it is likely that opportunity will be lost. It is not being suggested these people will cease worshipping altogether, but that if they had previously been significantly involved, that contribution will be considerably reduced. Conversely, if early retirees can be encouraged to participate more widely in Church based ministry and activities, then that contribution will more likely continue as they move into the Young Old age group. This is an important point because it was noted in the Introduction that the biggest increase in persons aged 65 years and over will occur between 2011 and 2021 when the baby boomers begin to enter the Young Old age group, and therefore retirement age. It would therefore seem important that the Church be proactive in ensuring it has ways of attracting early retirees so that when they enter the Young Old age group they are more likely to actively contribute to the Church. In other words, the Church needs to plan ahead to ensure there are others to follow the current group of active Young Old when they move into the Older Old group, and/or no longer participate for some reason. One participant commented that "The newly retired bring a lifetime of experience and most cases common sense", and added that Parishes need to take advantage of that.

Survey participants identified that of equal significance to retirement for the Young Old are grief and health issues. In fact very often the grief was connected to retirement and the loss of employment and the subsequent emotional, and sometimes physical or practical, changes. That is, employment gave people a sense of identity, maybe status,

¹⁹⁷ Figure 4.7.3.

and a sense of purpose and fulfilment. For many it provided a comfortable home and certain other lifestyle comforts and privileges. When that changed, when a person was no longer being identified with a particular job, and income was by virtue of superannuation or pension, there is often a grief and loss experience. Fischer claims that one of the biggest spiritual challenges faced by older persons is in fact dealing with loss.¹⁹⁸ Fischer does recognise that loss can occur at any stage of life, but points out that it occurs more often in the latter years through such things as retirement, failing health and death of spouse and friends. She further observes that this loss is often exacerbated by a feeling of worthlessness and being of no value.¹⁹⁹ This is supported by survey results where the need to belong, and the need to be valued and accepted, were also recognised as important factors for the Young Old.²⁰⁰ Some participants believed the Church had a role to play here in helping people in this situation to find meaning and purpose through being involved in Church activities, especially in the early stages of retirement.

Because this transition period involves many forms of loss, it may become a significant spiritual experience for some people. As a consequence, there is an opportunity for the Church to acknowledge this in some liturgical way either before, or at the same time as, these people are being encouraged into active ministry. As Ross Larson points out in his article "Becoming a Senior, (Part 2)", retirement is a "death experience" and therefore the Church can acknowledge it as an important "moment of passage" in people's lives, alongside other "moments of passage" such as special birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and so on.²⁰¹ Larson concludes that the Church needs to be alongside those who are retiring just as they would choose to be alongside someone

¹⁹⁸ Fischer, *Winter Grace*, op.cit., 144.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 144-145.

²⁰⁰ Figure 4.7.3.

²⁰¹ Ross Henry Larson, "Becoming a Senior (Part 2)", *The Clergy Journal* 77, No.1 (2000), 42.

dying. He notes that at retirement there are often a lot of celebratory functions to mark the occasion, but alongside these events, the retiring person is often seeking support at a deeper level. Larson therefore concludes that it is crucial the Church acknowledges the significance of this transition period and provides appropriate recognition and pastoral/spiritual support. This could be in the form of a support group that includes those who have been retired for some while and who have an empathy for those in the early days of retirement.²⁰² Such a support group is another example of ministry to older persons by older persons. It is also important to acknowledge that the partner or spouse of the person retiring from paid employment is also facing a changed domestic and social situation and this too needs to be recognised and pastorally responded to in some way.

One country participant added a useful perspective with respect to retiring male farmers. The participant has observed that male farmers find it hard to come to terms with retirement, whereas the farming women appear to deal with it better. Retiring farmers face the question of whether they will leave the country district or stay, and if they stay, where they will live as they can rarely stay on the farm after retirement. Retiring farmers also struggle with the fact that they no longer make the amount of money out of farming to which they have been accustomed and according to the participant, this often creates a feeling of anxiety and inadequacy in male farmers when they retire. The participant's observations were that the Church is not providing any support for these people. Hence it would seem important that the Church became aware of the pastoral needs of this particular group of Young Old retirees.

Survey responses also identified spiritual issues as a factor in the lives of the Young

²⁰² Ibid., 43.

Old, although these issues as separate entities were not identified.²⁰³ However, many participants did express a desire in their "wish list" to either provide a forum for the Young Old to nurture and grow their spirituality, or to provide opportunities for people in this age group to meet together for fellowship and mutual support. Again the issue of human and financial resources was identified as significantly limiting these opportunities being created. According to one participant though, the need for the Church to provide pastoral and spiritual support to the Young Old at a time of often great transition must remain an important consideration. The participant said:

A stable spiritual base can offer this group some stability amongst the chaos of transition.

This discussion has demonstrated that there are some clearly identifiable issues for the Young Old as they make the transition into retirement and the subsequent life changes. The Church has a significant role to play in supporting this group of people during this particular transition phase.

5.3 Change in the Lives of Older Persons

In the Literature Review, the issue of change in the lives of older persons was discussed.²⁰⁴ A number of survey participants, when given the opportunity for general comments, also recognised the impact change can have on older persons. A number of participants said they believe change within the Church is one of the reasons some older persons have withdrawn from the Church, which in turn has exacerbated their feeling of isolation and loneliness.²⁰⁵ Participants did not always distinguish between the Young Old and Older Old when responding to this question and so this discussion refers to older persons in general (aged 60 and over), unless otherwise indicated.

²⁰³ Figures 4.7.1 and 4.7.3.

²⁰⁴ Chapter 2.5.

²⁰⁵ See discussion in Chapter 2.2 with respect to change in the lives of older persons.

According to some survey participants, this change often creates tension in the lives of older persons. For example, one participant acknowledged that older persons often want to hang on to what they've known and held dear, and that needs to be valued, but:

... they are wrestling with [the fact that] they know within themselves things have got to change – thus a dilemma is created within in.

Another participant's perception of change for older persons was that they are willing to let go of a lot of the familiar traditions if it brings new life, but that they do not respond well to change for change sake. That is, if older persons can be helped to understand the reason(s) for a particular change, they may more easily let go of the old in favour of the new. This participant commented:

Change is an education process, especially spiritually or liturgically – as Ministers we are treading on holy ground and need to respect that. We (clergy) need to be able to enter their space, where they're at – not expect them to automatically be in our space.

The participant added that clergy who wish to take the initiative in implementing change need to handle it sensitively and over time and not enforce change all at once. This is consistent with scholars such as King who argues older persons have the potential for ongoing growth if they are provided with a nurturing environment in which to learn, grow and thus change.²⁰⁶ An example given by survey participants of how change can create tension between the Church and older persons in particular is with respect to changes in worship. Some participants commented that many older persons withdraw from Church life because worship styles have significantly changed over the years. This presents something of a dichotomy in that worship is recognised as a spiritual need in the Older Old,²⁰⁷ yet worship can become alienating because of change, thus inhibiting this spiritual need being nurtured. Some suggestions were offered by participants in how to address this tension. One was for clergy to perhaps

²⁰⁶ Chapter 2.1.

²⁰⁷ Figure 4.8.3.

help older persons who are struggling with change in worship styles to move from seeing their faith tied up in a certain style of liturgy to seeing their faith more in terms of a personal relationship with God. In other words, older persons could be helped to focus more on their relationship with God and to see that as the primary reason for coming to Church rather than the style of worship being the primary factor. Acknowledging that there is a complex relationship between faith and worship, in simplistic terms the implication of this suggestion is that the impact of any change in worship style would be reduced, and would not be such a determinant in whether one came to Church or not. Another participant suggested that the challenge for the Church with respect to this issue is for clergy to help older persons understand that "the Church is still the Church in a new age" and that they are not too old to engage with it. According to one participant, this is particularly so for older persons who may not have been to Church for some while and when they do return, discover a lot has changed. This participant stressed the importance of spending time with these people in order to help them understand the changes in worship. The participant argued that this has the potential to provide "a sense of coming home" and "something to belong to and treasure" rather than something that is alienating and therefore not appealing. One participant noted that in the city, people have the opportunity to find a style of worship that better suits their need, that is, maybe where change has been minimised, whereas country people are restricted to the worship offered in their local Church.

The issue of clergy being easily identifiable in pastoral ministry is another example of the impact of change on older persons.²⁰⁸ Whilst only two participants commented upon this as an area of change affecting older persons, I believe it needs to be recognised by others in order for them to understand the impact on older persons of

²⁰⁸ See discussion in Chapter 2.2.

clergy not wearing clerical attire.²⁰⁹ One of the two participants who commented on the importance of wearing clerical attire said it "facilitated greater connection for that moment". This reinforces Callahan's point noted in the Literature Review of not under-estimating the value of the present moment for older persons, particularly the Older Old. That is, whilst some Older Old may not remember a visit by clergy, the value of the older person being aware of the clergy's identity at the time should not be underestimated. This is especially so if the older person has many other visitors during the same period as the clergy visit.²¹⁰ To be able to easily distinguish the clergyperson from others helps the older person to value that visit at least whilst it is occurring. The claim for clergy to be easily recognised is also based on my own experience with older persons, and on comments made by Reverend Good who saw wearing clerical attire as one of the most helpful tools in ministering to older persons. He commented that being identified as a Church representative "opens more doors than it closes" with respect to opportunities to minister not only to the older person but to their family.

Aligned to this issue of clergy identification is the question Becker raises of **who** older persons recognise as an "official ambassador of Christ".²¹¹ He cites anecdotal evidence that suggests many Older Old persons in particular believe it is less valid receiving the sacraments, or even a visit, from someone other than the Pastor. Becker argues that historically, the housebound could be assured of a visit from the clergy when they received Communion, thus feeling assured they had not been forgotten by the "chief shepherd" (and therefore indirectly God).²¹² As Figure 4.5.1 demonstrates, a high proportion of ministry to the housebound still involves providing Holy

²⁰⁹ The two participants who commented on this as an issue said that when visiting older persons either in their home or in an aged care facility, they wear attire that immediately identifies them as a clergyperson.

²¹⁰ This is particularly so in Nursing Homes where many different people cross their path during the day (eg staff, visitors, medicos).

²¹¹ Becker, op.cit., 178.

²¹² Ibid., 164.

Communion and visiting. However, this is now often carried out by PAs²¹³, a change with which many older persons have had trouble. A survey participant commented to this effect:

A lot of them (older persons) here won't accept the ministry of PAs – Priest has to visit. I suspect for many that when I come through the door, God comes through the door.

This participant has observed that such a feeling or reaction by older persons creates a high degree of fear within them. Fear that "when they actually can't come to Church anymore that they will just be forgotten - that God will forget them". Thus the issue of helping older persons with this change is a serious pastoral concern and one that I would suggest the Church and its leaders not overlook or treat lightly. It is not being suggested that the practice of lay pastoral ministry be reduced. Rather that clergy invest time in helping older persons come to accept a lay visitor as a valid extension of the worshipping community to which they previously belonged (in an active sense), and to help them appreciate that the authenticity of the sacraments does not rest with who serves them.²¹⁴ However, Reverend Good cautioned that the involvement of lay persons in pastoral care, particularly visiting, does not excuse the Parish Priest from visiting as they do remain part of the pastoral care team.

Whilst scholars and participants are offering creative and pastoral ways of helping older persons deal with change, Ellor et al warn against diminishing the impact change has on older persons.²¹⁵ They suggest that older persons, particularly those nearing the end of their life, rely on the Church as a "source of stability" at a time when the rest of their life is unstable due to health issues and impending death.²¹⁶

²¹³ Figure 4.6.2 shows the significant contribution older persons make through the ministry of PA - their primary role often being visiting and taking Holy Communion to the housebound.

²¹⁴ Becker, op.cit., 164.

²¹⁵ Ellor et al, in Seeber (ed), op.cit., 106.

²¹⁶ Idem.

Maybe the issue of how change is introduced into the lives of older persons is best summarised by one participant who commented that it is difficult for anyone, not only older persons, to take in more than 5% change in any stage of education, thus change in any stage of life can be handled more effectively if it is introduced gradually. However, the impact of change on those people who have not been to Church for many years would remain significant. That is, there would no doubt have been major changes during their period of non attendance and so gradual change is not a possibility.

It is likely that the issue of change for older persons will be an ongoing topic of discussion as the Church endeavours to respond to an ever changing society. However, it would seem important that any change be undertaken with consideration for those who may need particular support in understanding and accepting change, including, and maybe even especially older persons.

5.4 Evangelism to Non Church Older Persons

According to survey responses, only a small percentage of parishioners aged 60 and over, including those with whom the Church had only minimal contact, were housebound.²¹⁷ Given that nationally only 8% of persons 65 years and over reside in a Nursing Home, it suggests there is a significant number of persons in independent living of whom the Church may not be aware. Thus a comment by one participant would appear to be extremely perceptive:

The greatest challenge in this Parish (and probably for whole Anglican Church) is to reconnect older people to the Church.

²¹⁷ The figures quoted in Chapter 4.4 represent people known to the current Minister and lay leaders and do not reflect those who

This supports the claims in the Literature Review²¹⁸ that there is a significant evangelistic opportunity available to the Church amongst older persons who may not have had regular, or any, association with the Church. One survey participant provided some useful insights that support the importance of evangelism to older persons, and also the importance of spending time with those who may be estranged from the Church. This participant pointed out that a lot of people stopped going to Church because of a negative experience, and yet in many instances no-one has followed them up and spent time helping them with reconciliation. These negative experiences include stewardship programmes that either demand money or check up on a person's offering, lack of or poor teaching that leaves people believing such things as the Anglican Church refuses to marry divorced persons, and dictatorial or legalistic style of leadership. According to this participant there are a lot of older persons who pray and read their bible daily, but have no formal connection with the Church. This latter comment supports the argument of making a distinction between religion and spirituality because the participant went on to argue that the regular daily faith patterns in the lives of older persons nurtured their spirituality but not their belief in the Church. These comments present a challenge for the Church and its leaders to take seriously reaching out to those who do not attend Church in order to discover, for example, whether there might be opportunities for reconciliation from a past hurt. Such reconciliation may encourage older persons who have become disconnected from the Church to reconnect and thus express their spirituality through a religious community. A possible benefit of that is that it may assist in addressing the issue of isolation and loneliness often experienced by older persons, and provide them with a community in which they can find support at a time when they perhaps most need it. It may be also that the Church can support these people through major transition times such as

may have stopped going to Church some time ago and with whom the Church has lost contact.

²¹⁸ Chapter 2.2.

retirement and the related issues that were identified earlier. In addition, it is also important for the Church to take seriously the evidence that supports the benefits religion and/or spirituality can have in dealing with mental health issues, including depression which is known to be a major factor for many older persons. It is important that the Church is proactive in reaching out to older persons who have not maintained links with a Church community because these people may be reluctant to initiate the contact. One participant provided another important incentive to reach out to older persons and that is, he believed that if older persons are reconnected with the Church, then younger family members are more likely to come to Church as well. The participant's experience is that in a lot of families, if the grandparents do not attend Church then no-one else does, particularly young children.

The issue of insufficient human resources was again raised by some participants as a limitation to effectively implementing an evangelism programme, especially in some country Churches where human resources are often more limited than in the metropolitan area. This was highlighted by a country participant who said "You do feel a little bit overwhelmed by having to do so much". Another country participant acknowledged that parishioners in the country often care for and support each other, thus addressing the loneliness issue to some extent, but added that there are many non Church people, many of whom are former parishioners, who "slip through the cracks" because of lack of human resources to visit. This is exacerbated by many country Anglican Churches not having a resident stipended Priest, or only having a Priest part-time, thus making and/or retaining connections with people very difficult. So again, the issue of lack of human resources is identified as a reason for an area of ministry having limitations in its application. On the other hand, if non church people are reconnected to the Church, the lack of human resources may become less of an issue if

these people become actively involved in Church programmes.

5.5 Inter-generational Relationships – A Way Forward?

Whilst inter-generational relationships may not be a foreign concept in Churches, it is a relatively new area of discussion in the public domain. It has become a topic of discussion because many scholars see it as the way forward for the Church to grow and for community life to be enhanced. The results from this research indicate that participants consider such a concept has potential but that many factors need to be considered for it to work effectively. For example, some participants suggested that inter-generational relationships would probably only be effective if a relationship between the young and old existed in the first place, or that the relationship was somehow first nurtured. In other words, to simply put an older person and younger person together in order for the former to teach the latter may not work, for various reasons such as the older person being perceived as old and therefore "out of touch". But if the younger person knew the older person, they may be more likely to see them as a friend who was willing to help them. One participant commented:

The barrier is where the young people haven't given the oldies an opportunity - if know them already, grown up with them, works very well – a very great ease of mixing.

Another participant referred to the concept of inter-generational relationships as "spiritual friendship", which supports both Christiansen's, and Hauerwas and Yordy's, arguments concerning the importance and value of building friendship links ("spiritual friendships") between older and younger members of the Church.²¹⁹ One participant provided a positive example of this whereby a couple in their sixties successfully runs the youth ministry. The premise of this particular participant (a Parish Priest) is that "young people will respond to anyone who shows a genuine interest in them". The

Church of another participant has a community singing group that includes people from age 15 to 75. This group is not only providing an opportunity for inter-generational relationships to develop, but is also providing a connection between community and Church as most of the singers are not Church members.

Recognising that some young people have negative opinions of older persons, one participant commented that if a young person has just one (positive) experience of an older person then their pre-suppositions are questioned. That is, if a younger person believes older persons are out of touch or irrelevant, they are more likely to change those negative perceptions and attitudes if they have a positive experience with them. Another participant indicated that in fact once younger people have visited a Nursing Home as part of a school visitation programme, their presuppositions about older people are challenged. "Once they have done it once, they get a real buzz" added the participant. This participant did warn, however, that the Church is "Swimming against the tide of a lot of advertising stereotyping" with respect to creating and encouraging these inter-generational opportunities. Whilst there is no doubt some truth in this comment, it should not preclude opportunities being created whereby inter-generational age groups are encouraged to learn from and nurture each other. McCarthy succinctly summarises a reason for this:

*Trans-generational continuity is essential to the church, which by definition includes the unity of all generations and all times and places in communion with God.*²²⁰

Figure 4.10.2 demonstrates some of the ways participants said inter-generational relationships and the building of "spiritual friendships" are working in Parishes, or have the potential to work if initiated creatively. As can be seen the major ways inter-generational relationships are carried out are consistent with those being suggested by

²¹⁹ Chapter 2.4.

scholars. For example, a number of Parishes are inviting older persons to be involved in the preparation of young people for First Communion, young adults for Confirmation, and young parents for the baptism of their children. Some participants supported the reasons given by scholars why older persons are important in this role. That is, they can tell the Church's story, and share their experiences and reflective wisdom of living a Christian life.²²¹ Commenting on the need for this to occur more frequently, one participant said that it was "Sad that so much wisdom never gets used". One participant said that this type of inter-generational relationship had worked in reverse in their Parish when a young adult in their 20s sponsored a 67 year old person for Confirmation. Some participants expressed the opinion that older persons themselves need to be mentored prior to teaching younger people as a way of helping older persons learn how younger people may see things differently, and as a way of helping them more effectively communicate what they know. Reverend Good added that such an experience could encourage older persons in their own ongoing faith commitment and thus help keep their faith active and alive. Equipping older persons to contribute in this way has the benefit of responding to two of the identified needs of both the Young Old and the Older Old. That is, the need to remain connected to the Church community, and the need to be valued/to belong.

Another correlation between the suggestions of scholars and comments by participants is with respect to "Adopt-a-Grandparent". A country participant identified this as something that has significant potential in country towns where young children are often quite isolated from grandparents. The concept of "Adopt-a-Grandparent" was seen by some participants to be of value to both the younger and older generations in that the younger ones benefit from a grandparent influence, and the older persons

²²⁰ McCarthy, in Hauerwas et al (eds), op.cit., 227.

²²¹ Chapter 2.4.

benefit from being able to contribute to an important area of ministry. That is, providing physical, emotional and maybe spiritual support to young people who may not otherwise receive that support from extended family. One participant in fact commented that "Adopt-a-Grandparent" works best if it is based on a "spiritual connectedness" rather than as a result of creating what could be perceived as a false relationship. Another participant issued a word of caution with respect to "Adopt-a-Grandparent", and that was to guarantee adequate processes are in place to ensure the safety of the children. Overall, this concept has good support and is clearly one worth pursuing within the Church as a way to enhance inter-generational relationships.

The above suggestions are creative and positive ways that have been identified as fostering inter-generational relationships. However, only a small percentage of Parishes are implementing these ideas, and in other Parishes where various inter-generational activities are occurring, they are mostly the focus of special occasions. Therefore in order to encourage a greater fostering of inter-generational relationships within Parishes, below are some suggestions offered by scholars, survey participants, and myself, which are in addition to those discussed in the Literature Review.²²²

- Older persons can offer to help families with after school care – but in ways that encourage young and old to engage and learn from each other, eg with homework, play games, just chat.²²³
- Older persons can assist with children's ministry, eg by teaching Sunday School.
- Older adults can assist younger adults and young people with language lessons if the latter are new residents needing to learn written and spoken English.²²⁴
- Young people can offer older persons computer lessons, or help them programme a new video.

²²² Chapter 2.4.

²²³ Jones and Jones, *op.cit.*, 199; McCarthy, in Hauerwas et al (eds), *op.cit.*, 243.

- Young adults who are pastoral care leaders in their Church can take Holy Communion to older persons unable to get to church. They and other Church members can offer to help with domestic chores.²²⁵
- Activity days can be organised at the Church where older people can share their gifts and skills with younger people, such as baking, painting, banner making, even minor maintenance work for the Church.²²⁶ This type of activity would be beneficial during school holidays as "child-free" older adults could offer parents some relief from the "I'm bored" syndrome that so often happens during holiday time.

It may be, though, that the most important aspect in inter-generational activities is not so much who is imparting knowledge and wisdom to the other, but that the shared experiences enhance and enrich all those involved.

5.6 Further Pastoral Responses to the Ageing Population

Further to the suggestions made above on how the Church and its leaders might better respond to an ageing population, there are three additional areas of which I believe the Church needs to be cognisant with respect to responding more pastorally to older persons. The first is that the Anglican Church, both nationally and in the Diocese of Perth, has the opportunity to provide the necessary leadership to influence how clergy and lay pastoral workers perceive older persons and to provide them with the tools to better respond to older persons. For example, in the most recent edition of the Anglican Church's *A Prayer Book for Australia* under the section "Prayers for Various Occasions, Section 2", prayers for the aged are in the same sentence as for the infirm,

²²⁴ Survey participant.

²²⁵ McCarthy, in Hauerwas et al (eds), op.cit., 243.

²²⁶ Keely, op.cit., 43.

bereaved, the lonely, sick and suffering, thus implying only negative imagery of old age.²²⁷ In the section “Prayers for Society and the Common Life”, one prayer under the heading “The Aged” speaks of older persons as “having given a lifetime of service”, thus suggesting their service has ended.²²⁸ The second prayer for “the aged” comes under prayers for “The poor and neglected”, thus implying all older persons are poor and neglected.²²⁹ This shows there is clearly a need to change the perceptions and attitudes that are reflected in liturgy such as the Anglican Prayer Book. As such, I would suggest that the Liturgical Committee of the Anglican Church be made aware of these anomalies and be requested to remove assumptions about being older, and to separate prayers for older people from other groups of people. In the meantime, Church leaders can begin making necessary changes in intercessions by modifying prayers so that older persons are not put in a category that assumes a health difficulty. Certainly *A Prayer Book for Australia* offers plenty of scope and flexibility for Parishes to pray independently of set prayers and so the changes being recommended can start now at individual Parish level.

The second area is in relation to the Pastoral Handbook that the Anglican Diocese of Perth provides to its clergy. This Handbook contains guidelines and information for various pastoral and liturgical situations. The 2003 revised edition provides instructions for administering Holy Communion to the sick and housebound. In the previous edition, instructions had only been for the sick, with no specific guidelines in caring for either the housebound old or the old in aged care facilities, who may not be sick, and so attempts have been made in the revised Handbook to address this. However, the heading for the new instructions still refers only to “The Communion of the Sick”, thus still implying to some extent that all housebound are sick. A simple

²²⁷ The Anglican Church of Australia, *A Prayer Book for Australia* (Alexandria, NSW: Broughton Books, 1995), 186.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 208.

amendment could change this anomaly.

A comment by Oliver, directed at the Church (or Synagogue), underscores the importance of addressing the above two examples:

*Older persons are not alike; each has his or her own set of needs and experiences. Do your homework.*²³⁰

The third area of which I believe the Church needs to particularly cognisant is the issue of adult children not having the same amount of time to care for older parents. In the Introduction it was noted that older persons will increasingly be living alone.²³¹ It was further pointed out in the Literature Review that older persons are less likely to have familial support primarily because of changing family networks and increased mobility of children.²³² However, only a very small percentage of participants identified this area as an issue for older persons. Therefore I believe it is important for the Church to heed the statistics and evidence now emerging that indicates the role that the Church may need to increasingly play in providing additional pastoral support for older persons in lieu of available familial support. This may create a theological tension for some who believe it is important for families to model the New Testament edict that teaches how to care for elderly family members (eg 1 Timothy 5:8, 16) and filial responsibilities toward parents (eg Ephesians 6:1-4 and Colossians 3:20-21). However, it is clear that for a variety of reasons, caring for older parents will be significantly restricted in many contemporary western family situations. It is not being suggested that children abdicate total responsibility for care to the Church or other organisations. Rather the recognition of the increasing role that the Church may play in pastoral care for the Young Old and Older Old is a recognition of contemporary social patterns in

²²⁹ Ibid., 209.

²³⁰ Oliver, ""Reflections", op.cit., 42. Or as Koenig and Weaver claim, "The aging process is characterized by heterogeneity. In other words, no two persons age exactly alike", Koenig and Weaver, *Pastoral Care*, op.cit., 93.

²³¹ Chapter 1.1.

western society where people are living much longer but may not have the familial support networks around them because of changing family situations. That being so, it is important to also point out that a number of participants commented that older persons have access to a wide variety of community services and that the Church needed to identify its place amongst those and determine what needs it is most responsible for when responding to older persons. The point being made was that the Church is not solely responsible for meeting every need of older persons, particularly some of the social ones, and that at times if a person has a specific and difficult need, it may be more appropriate to refer them to a specialised community service to supplement the Church's involvement.

5.7 The Importance of Training in the Pastoral Care of Older Persons

The preceding discussion has highlighted a number of issues concerning the relationship between the Church and older persons, and has suggested some important ways in which the Church can better respond pastorally to the ageing population. This is important information that needs to be communicated to clergy and lay pastoral workers to assist them to their ministry to older persons. As scholars are arguing, clergy and lay pastoral workers need to be adequately trained in the area of ministry to older persons in order for them to "recognise the specific needs of older persons, and to be aware of the enormous potential there is for involving older persons in Parish life".²³³

Survey results demonstrate that a significant percentage of participants did recognise the need for training in ministry to older persons, and many expressed a desire to

²³² Chapter 2.2.

²³³ Quote from Chapter 2.4.

undertake training because they had not received any in this area.²³⁴ This suggests that many Anglican clergy are aware that older persons form a large part of the Church community and are an important group to acknowledge and include in their pastoral care programmes. As one participant commented, ministry to older persons is "going to be an increasing pastoral area" for the Church. However, several key factors were raised by participants that may be deterrents in them undertaking the training. One is that a significant number of clergy are not full time (a consequence of reduced financial viability of many Anglican Churches in the Diocese of Perth) and as such many clergy do not easily have either the time or the financial resources to attend a lot of training. "I am very stingy with time" commented one participant, who added that he makes his choices on whether to attend professional development courses based on a demonstrated quality of what is being offered. "There is a lot of well intention around but not quality" the participant concluded. Time and cost are particularly an issue in the Goldfields-Country region of the Diocese of Perth where many of the non stipended Local Priests and Deacons have other work commitments and therefore do not have the available time for additional training, and some do not always have financial resources available because they are non stipended. Thus there is a potential conflict with respect to training in that whilst participants acknowledged the need for it, particular circumstances such as time and cost may make it difficult to access. Comments made by a number of participants suggest one response to this is to ensure the training is promoted in such a way that clergy will be encouraged to give it priority in the time they have available. To that end, one participant suggested that the content of the training programme be such that clergy see it as something worthwhile to attend. One participant summarised the thoughts of several when he said "If what is offered is good then it's worth pursuing". It was noted in the Results chapter that cost was not a significant factor in why participants had not attended any prior training in the

²³⁴ Chapter 4.3.

area of ministry to older persons.²³⁵ This suggests that although participants were concerned about cost, if the training being offered is considered to be worthwhile, then cost may not be the major deterrent in attending. As another participant commented, "If something is worthwhile, you pay for it". In view of these responses, it would seem imperative any training programme be carefully planned and adequately promoted to encourage clergy and lay pastoral workers to give it priority.

Connected to the issues of time and cost is the distance needed to travel to training. It became clear from survey responses that location of training is both a time and distance issue in that if clergy or lay persons have to travel some distance to attend training, then the time factor needs to be considered. For example, one outer Perth suburb participant commented that to travel to the location where a lot of training occurs within the Anglican Diocese of Perth, travel time is at least an hour one way. Thus this participant indicated a reluctance to attend anything that was less than a full day as the travel time would not make it worthwhile. Participants in other outer suburbs and semi rural communities responded similarly. Some participants suggested training be offered at a Deanery level as that would provide the best opportunity for clergy and lay persons to attend. Time and distance for country participants are even greater issues, with the added burden of extra travel costs through longer distances and more expensive fuel. It was suggested by country participants that localised training would make it much more accessible to a wider group of people. However, even this is difficult to achieve in areas such the Goldfields-Country region because many Deaneries are made up of Parishes quite some distance apart, thus "local" often means several hundred kilometres away. For example, the average travel time for clergy to attend one particular Deanery meeting is 1.5hours, and although the venue is shared amongst Deanery members, almost always one person has to travel two hours.

²³⁵ Chapter 4.3.

The issues of time, distance and cost underline why the majority of participants preferred one full day training.²³⁶ Although there was some support for both a half day, and for two whole days, overall these preferences were not the first choice. Not all the reasons related to travel, cost and distance, but many participants did express them as the reason why one whole day was preferred. This would be particularly relevant to the country where, as noted above, Parishes are generally widespread. A further consideration for training in the country, according to survey responses, is that it needs to be offered so as not to conflict with busy times such as seeding and harvesting. Although again, as one participant added, if what is offered is seen as a priority, then it can be achieved as long as adequate notice is given.

In order to emphasise the increasing importance of training in ministry to older persons within the Church, scholars and other interested persons have begun to argue strongly that this training needs to begin during pre-ordination formation to ensure clergy are aware as early as possible of the issues surrounding the increasing number of older persons within the Church, and are equipped to respond. It is hoped clergy would then communicate this knowledge and the skills learned to lay pastoral workers in their Parishes or other ministry environments. However, only a very small percentage of participants had been exposed to any training in this area during pre-ordination formation, although a high proportion of participants indicated they would have appreciated some form of training during this period. In fact, many responded with emphatic comments such as "Definitely", "Absolutely – feel let down by not having it", "Yes indeed – a big hole there", "Seriously yes". In previous research conducted in 2000²³⁷, it was noted that the then Director of the Anglican Priestly Formation programme indicated there were no plans to incorporate training in ministry to older

²³⁶ Figure 4.2.1.

²³⁷ Barrett-Lennard, *Spiritual Which Way*, op.cit., 26.

persons into the programme. The reason given was that the programme "is restricted by time in covering many important issues". However, I believe this research has demonstrated that not only are scholars and gerontologists arguing convincingly for early training, but that clergy within the Diocese of Perth recognise the importance of it. This is consistent with Reverend Good's observation that it was very important to include training in aged care in the formation programme for ordained ministry because of the impact an increasing ageing population is already having on the Church. The strength of the comments by participants may provide the impetus for those who currently prepare the content of formation training in the Anglican Diocese of Perth to include some component in ministry to older persons. Furthermore, I believe the need expressed by many participants for training reinforces the importance of it being a compulsory part of pre-ordination training, and a regular part of professional development undertaken by clergy and lay pastoral workers.

Survey results also indicate that there is currently a greater number of Young Old than Older Old in Parishes.²³⁸ However, given the projections outlined in the Introduction that the most rapidly increasing age group in Australia is the 85 years and over, and the rapidly increasing number of centenarians in Australia, these statistics are likely to change significantly during the next 10-20 years. This suggests that a particular concern for the Church is the education of its leaders with respect to the different needs of the various age demographics. This will help to ensure all older persons are not cared for in the same way, and that the contribution some Older Old can still make to Church life is recognised. As one participant commented, generalisations (with respect to older persons) have meant that no specific attention has been given to the particular needs of the various age demographics in later years. Another participant commented that "Clergy need to change how they relate to different ages – it is a mindset" and

added that this is something that needs to be considered in any training in this area. Thus whilst some Churches may not currently have a significant number of persons in the Older Old demographic, projections are that that will change significantly in the not too distant future. Therefore clergy need to be educated as to the varying needs and issues surrounding older persons to enable them to more effectively incorporate pastoral care to older persons into their short and long term Parish programmes, and to ensure those who are able to contribute in some are provided with ways and opportunities to do so.

With respect to the aged care courses offered by TAFE, it is acknowledged that these Certificates are aimed primarily at non religious workers who care for older persons in aged care facilities. However, I would suggest it is also important that these Certificates include modules that focus on the pastoral and spiritual needs of older persons in order for aged care workers to be equipped as best as possible to recognise and respond to these needs. That is not to say the aged care worker must be capable of meeting those needs but rather they be aware they are an important factor in a person's overall wellbeing, and that there are support resources available to call upon (for example local Church, Chaplain). By including spiritual and pastoral needs in the TAFE certificates, carers will become more aware of the benefits to the residents in aged care facilities of having these needs met. For example, as was noted in the Literature Review, evidence is strong that religion and/or spirituality make a significant positive contribution to a person's overall wellbeing. Further, spirituality and religion are believed to help people better cope with mental health issues such as depression, which is often a major issue for older persons as they struggle with the implications of becoming older.²³⁹ Thus if carers were made aware of these benefits, it may encourage

²³⁸ Figures 4.4.1 and 4.4.2.

²³⁹ Chapter 2.3.

them to ensure the spiritual and/or religious needs of older persons are adequately met through liaison with a local Church, or in the case of an aged care residency, by the appointment of a Chaplain. This is the basis of what Kimble is arguing when he cites Frankl's wholistic approach to understanding personhood.²⁴⁰ Kimble argues that without the spiritual dimension, there is only "a monistic, reductionistic, psychosomatic model of personhood", and this is insufficient to allow a person to transcend the difficulties and challenges in life, particularly later life. It is the spiritual dimension of a person's being, argues Kimble, that enables them to transcend suffering and retain a sense of self worth and dignity.²⁴¹ As a result of this evidence, I believe a collaboration between non religious teaching institutions and the Churches would contribute to the overall wellbeing of older persons.

It is clear from this discussion that there is much scope for new and creative training opportunities to be offered to clergy and lay pastoral workers to better equip them to respond more pastorally to the ageing population. Furthermore, persons working in non religious aged care facilities would benefit from a component being included in their training to highlight the benefits of older persons' spiritual and pastoral needs being given serious consideration.

5.8 Summary

This chapter has highlighted six important areas where the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Perth might respond more pastorally to the ageing population. The first was specific ministry to the Older Old that focussed on the need for Parishes to creatively seek ways to increase the amount of visiting from that which is currently

²⁴⁰ Chapter 2.1.

²⁴¹ Kimble, in MacKinlay (ed), *Mental Health and Spirituality*, op.cit., 44-45. This is supported by King who argues that those caring for older persons need to have at least a general awareness of the spiritual dimension of the human person in order to provide the best possible care (King, in Jewell (ed), op.cit., 140), and by Oliver who challenges both society and the Church to

occurring as a way of helping to alleviate the loneliness and isolation often experienced by the Older, and the need to ensure any Older Old who are able to, are given opportunities and encouragement to participate in Church life, whether that be an active or passive type of ministry. Secondly, the transition into retirement and its many consequences was seen to impact significantly on the Young Old. It was therefore felt that the Church needed to be proactive in creating opportunities for early retirees to become involved in Church activities, and to liturgically recognise this period as a time of loss as well as being a time of new opportunities. Thirdly, the impact of various forms of change on older persons was noted, particularly changes in worship, the way Clergy present themselves, and the increasing involvement of PAs in visitation (including providing Holy Communion). Fourthly, evangelism to non Church older persons was considered an important area of pastoral care with which the Church needed to engage. Fifthly, it was noted that although inter-generational relationships are being considered by scholars as one of the ways the Church can go forward, the majority of participants were more cautious about this idea and gave it only qualified support, with certain factors needing to be considered for them to work effectively. In addition to these areas, it was considered that the Anglican Church could respond more pastorally to the ageing population by helping to reverse negative attitudes and perceptions of older persons through liturgy, by amending the relevant heading in the Pastoral Handbook to remove the implication that all housebound older persons are sick, and by exploring ways of at least partly compensating for many older persons living alone without family support. Finally, the need for clergy and lay pastoral workers to be adequately trained in the area of caring pastorally for the increasing number of older persons within the Church was highlighted. Furthermore, it is believed this training needs to be an integral part of the pre-ordination training

adopt a holistic approach to ageing by considering four dimensions of personhood, ie physical, mental, social and spiritual (Oliver, "A Holistic Approach", op.cit., 8-16).

programme in order to prepare clergy as early as possible to respond pastorally to the ageing population, and to enable them to equip lay pastoral care workers once they are in a Parish or aged care Chaplaincy.

As this research did not interview older persons themselves, it is not possible to test any of the perceptions, arguments or suggestions mentioned in this discussion. Further research would thus prove useful in this respect.

With this brief summary of the discussion in mind, the ensuing chapter will draw some important conclusions from scholarship and comments by survey participants. It will then be possible to structure an outline of a proposed training programme which it is hoped will benefit not only the clergy and lay pastoral workers of the Anglican Diocese of Perth, but all persons and organisations who have a particular concern for older persons.

CHAPTER SIX

Much of our training that goes on is for Parish work, school chaplaincy, hospital chaplaincy etc – but have a lot that happens for elderly people I think the elderly have been neglected. (Survey response)

6. STRUCTURE OF A PROPOSED TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR CLERGY AND LAY PASTORAL CARE WORKERS IN MINISTRY TO OLDER PERSONS

6.1 Introduction to the Proposed Training Programme

The structure of the training programme that will follow incorporates the following feedback from participants.

- Although preferred training duration was one full week day, there was a sense amongst participants that if the training was longer and believed to be worthwhile, then participants would possibly attend. Therefore the suggested training programme is over two full days but with the days a fortnight apart. There are two major benefits to separating the days. One is that clergy can more easily commit to one full day at a time, and the second is that insights learnt from day one can be applied during the two weeks and feedback shared on day two. In addition, two days were chosen because ministry to older persons is at such an embryonic stage that there is much information and many skills to be passed on to clergy and lay pastoral workers and it was considered one day would not be sufficient time to cover even the basic information.
- The starting time of 9.00am and finishing time of 4.30pm allow for those who have to travel the furthest to as best as possible avoid travel in peak hour traffic, and to as best as possible allow for those with a young family to attend to the morning responsibilities.
- Advance notice of training was seen as very important in order for clergy in particular to build it into their schedule. Therefore a promotional leaflet for this training will be sent six months in advance. Advance notice can also be given through the monthly newsletter sent out by the Archbishop of Perth to all clergy

within the Anglican Diocese of Perth, as well as requesting the training course be included on the Diocese of Perth website.

- It was clear from survey responses that travelling time needs to be minimised. Although the venue chosen, Wollaston College, means some clergy will have to travel greater distances, it is a venue well known to the Anglican community and has recently been upgraded to include conference and workshop facilities. This latter point, and the fact that the training programme is over whole days, may mean the extra distance will not be a significant issue for clergy and lay pastoral workers. In addition, the intent of the programme is to make it as appealing as possible so that clergy and lay pastoral workers will view it as a priority to attend, thus minimising any negative attitudes toward the tyranny of distance.
- Although the location of the training is in the city, the trainer could offer the same programme to country regions at a centre most accessible to the majority, such as a Deanery.
- The cost of \$40.00pp per day is based on 2005 costs for providing morning and afternoon teas and lunch, and covering the meal costs of presenters. It may be the Anglican Diocese of Perth will subsidise the training, in which case the cost can be reduced. However, I do not believe \$40.00 a day would be prohibitive given a high percentage of clergy have financial provision for professional development, and most parishes have financial provision for training of lay people. Stipended clergy in the Goldfields-Country Region are provided with a professional development allowance in order to facilitate them attending some training and/or workshops.
- The date chosen for the day's training is post Easter, therefore avoiding the busyness of the season of Lent and the related Easter liturgical preparations, which begin soon after most clergy have returned from summer vacation. After Easter the Church's year is mostly free of major festivals and celebrations for some time, thus

enabling clergy and lay pastoral workers to more easily attend events such as training courses.

- The programme is a two day programme and therefore participants will be strongly encouraged to attend both days. However, if a participant can only attend one day, then an allowance may be made for that, although if it is the second day only that is attended, participants will be made aware they will not have the advantage of the previous session's input and will not be eligible for a Certificate of Completion. When offered in country regions, the two days will need to be consecutive to limit the amount of travelling participants may need to incur.

The content of the training programme is influenced by the following factors that became evident throughout this research.

- The majority of participants had had no specific training in the area of ministry to older persons, therefore the training starts with the most basic information and does not make any assumptions about what participants know or do not know. For example, statistical evidence of the ageing population, focussing particularly on Australia and Western Australia, will be given on the first day to emphasise the importance of the training. Key results from this research will also be presented, with some being elaborated upon in separate sessions. Whilst some clergy may have had experience of working with older persons with memory loss, one session on this will be included in the training to ensure the most recent information is provided to course participants.
- Small groups and other interactive activities have been included in the training programme in response to feedback from survey participants who had attended some training and found such methods useful and more engaging.
- Reverend Good commented that one of the most urgent areas of training in

ministry to older persons is for clergy and lay pastoral workers to "have an understanding of the things that are valued by older people, ie understand the past, what life was like 50-60 years ago". Thus a workshop is included that focuses on the meaning of the past, present and future for older persons.

- Participants expressed a desire to be better equipped to respond to the ageing population. Therefore in order to equip course participants with specific skills in ministering to older persons, people with particular expertise in the area of ministry to older persons will be invited to contribute to the training programme, as will a representative from the Chaplaincy Department at Anglican Homes.
- Reverend Good felt that the least helpful conferences he had attended over the years were those that provided too much information. Therefore this training course attempts to provide a balance between teaching input and practical workshops in order to both retain the interest of course participants, and to seek the participants ideas and feedback on ministry to older persons. I believe sharing ideas can further enhance everyone's learning, and may provide additional information for future training programmes.
- It is acknowledged that individual Parishes will have their own unique pastoral circumstances with respect to older persons. Therefore one session is provided on Day Two whereby course participants have the opportunity to reflect upon the information and skills they have gained during the training course and consider how they might apply them to their own situation.
- The first training course offered will be a pilot programme in order to solicit feedback for future training. The feedback will be sought from a Feedback Form distributed toward the end of the second day (see Section 6.5).
- The Plenary Session will provide an opportunity for course participants to ask questions, or seek clarity, on any issues relating to the training programme or other

matters concerning ministering to older persons.

Some of the presentations are based on the training programme that was put together for the Anglican Homes training course that was to have been held in May 2005 but was cancelled due to lack of enrolments.²⁴² The two co-ordinators of that course, Reverend Stuart Good and Mrs Beth Douglas, have given permission for these sessions to be included in this training programme.

²⁴² Those presentations are "The Relevance of Past, Present and Future for Older Persons", "Family Dynamics with Older Persons, and Ministry to the Families Of Older Persons", "Learning to Care (spirituality)", "The Value of the Present Moment: Memory Loss and Confusion", and "Liturgies for Older Persons".

6.2 Structure of the Proposed Training Programme

**TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR CLERGY AND LAY
PASTORAL WORKERS IN MINISTRY TO OLDER PERSONS**

**WOLLASTON COLLEGE, MT CLAREMONT
THURSDAY 11 MAY 2006
9.00am to 4.30pm**

**COST: \$40.00pp per day
(Includes morning and afternoon teas and lunch)**

DAY ONE

| TIME | SUBJECT | PRESENTER |
|--------|--|-----------------------|
| 8.45am | Tea, coffee available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants given name badge, notepad and pen on arrival. | |
| 9.00am | Morning Prayers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offered in the way it would be taken with older persons, thus providing participants with the opportunity to appreciate the subtleties of providing worship to older persons. Such differences would include the leaders projecting their voice more and speaking more slowly, and everybody speaking more slowly in those sections that invite congregational participation. | Julie Barrett-Lennard |
| 9.15am | Welcome and Introduction to Course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenters introduced. • Participants invited to introduce themselves and their place of ministry. • Explain there will be two workshops – same two offered on Day One and Day Two so participants can attend each workshop. Discussion on workshops will occur on Day Two. • Explain programme will include a small component on memory loss but this will not be extensive as this area is very specialised and could in fact take up the two whole days. Explain that comprehensive training in memory loss and dementia care is available through the Sir James McCusker Training Foundation. • Explain a Certificate of Completion will be issued at the end of Day Two if participants have come to both days. • Point out an Evaluation Form will be provided on Day Two and feedback provided which will influence future training. | Julie Barrett-Lennard |
| 9.30am | Powerpoint Presentation: <i>Facts and Stats of an Ageing Population</i> | Julie Barrett-Lennard |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief presentation providing statistical data demonstrating exactly how the population is ageing, with particular reference to Australia and Western Australia, and some quotes from scholars and gerontologists with respect to the Church "being asleep as the world around it ages". | |
| 9.45am | <p>Discussion: <i>Implications for the Church</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to write in their notepad: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ any reactions to the content of the presentation ○ how they believe information from the presentation will affect both the wider Anglican Church, and their particular Church. ○ some of their current perceptions of, and attitudes toward, older persons. ○ the ways in which they believe older people are valuable to the Church • Invite participants to share ideas - note responses on whiteboard. | |
| 10.00am | <p>Powerpoint Presentation: <i>Key Results from Research Undertaken by Julie Barrett-Lennard</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus particularly on the spiritual and pastoral needs of older persons, drawing attention to the different issues between Young Old (60-75) and Older Old (76+) as reflected in responses to survey (many participants at the training would have contributed to the survey so it could be reasonably assumed they will be interested in the results). • Define spiritual/spirituality, religion and pastoral care. • Include selection of quotes from survey participants on importance of training in area of ministry to older persons. | Julie Barrett-Lennard |
| 10.30am | Morning Tea | |
| 10.45am | <p>Workshop 1: <i>The Relevance of Past, Present and Future for Older Persons</i></p> <p>OR</p> <p>Workshop 2: <i>Family Dynamics with Older Persons, and Ministry to the Families Of Older Persons</i></p> | Specialist Anglican Homes Chaplain |
| 11.30 | <p>Presentation: <i>Older Persons Who Live Alone – Why and How the Church Can Be Important</i></p> <p>Content to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visitation can assist in alleviating loneliness and isolation (use survey data to support argument) • contact with a Church representative can provide assurance that they (older persons) are not forgotten, either by God or by the Church | Julie Barrett-Lennard |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offers the possibility of reconnecting older persons with the Church, thus providing reconciliation for those who may have been estranged • offers the possibility of reaching out to those who may not have previously had significant contact with the Church but now in the latter years may be struggling with life and death issues with which the Church may be able to assist • the demonstrated benefits of religion and/or spirituality on mental health, particularly amongst older persons, thus contributing to their overall sense of wellbeing | |
| 12.00 | Video: <i>Learning to Care (spirituality)</i> | Specialist |
| 12.30 | Lunch | |
| 1.15pm | Presentation: <i>The Value of the Present Moment: Memory Loss and Confusion</i> | Specialist |
| 2.45pm | Small Groups Case Study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of studies to be available so each group has a different one to discuss (see 6.4 for samples of Case Studies). | |
| 3.15pm | Afternoon tea | |
| 3.30pm | Feedback and Discussion From Case Studies | |
| 3.45pm | Presentation: <i>Helpful Insights and Skills in Ministering to Older Persons (eg Home Communion, conversations with older persons)</i> | Specialist |
| 4.20pm | Comments from the Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite verbal feedback/comments on any part of the day. • Invite participants to be "older person aware" during next two weeks and to bring any observations/thoughts/feelings to next training day. | Julie Barrett-Lennard |
| 4.30pm | Close with Benediction | Anglican Homes Chaplain |

**TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR CLERGY AND LAY PASTORAL
WORKERS IN MINISTRY TO OLDER PERSONS**

**WOLLASTON COLLEGE, MT CLAREMONT
THURSDAY 25 MAY 2006
9.00am to 4.30pm**

**COST: \$40.00pp per day
(Includes morning and afternoon teas and lunch)**

DAY TWO

| TIME | SUBJECT | PRESENTER |
|---------------|---|-----------------------|
| 8.45am | <p>Tea, coffee available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants again given name badge, notepad and pen on arrival because it can be reasonably expected participants would not remember to bring these from Day One. There may also be some new participants. | |
| 9.00am | <p>Morning Prayers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a participant to lead the prayers in order to demonstrate how they would lead prayers for older persons. | Participant |
| 9.15am | <p>Welcome and Introduction to Day Two</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce Presenters for those who may not have been at Day One, and any new Presenters for Day Two. | Julie Barrett-Lennard |
| 9.25am | <p>Feedback from Insights and Experiences Gained During Previous Two Weeks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants be invited to share any new observations, insights, experiences, change in attitudes and/or perceptions with respect to responding or ministering to older persons as a result of attending Day One of the training programme (eg Did they say community prayers any differently? Were they more aware of the needs of older persons? Did they feel more comfortable visiting an older person?) | Julie Barrett-Lennard |
| 9.45am | <p>Presentation: <i>The Clergyperson and Lay Pastoral Worker as Pastoral and Spiritual Carers of Older Persons</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> discussion on boundaries how to deal with difficult and/or demanding older persons when and how to refer older persons to specialist support (eg Silver Chain Home and Community Care, social workers, medical intervention) role of the Church vis-a-vis community | Specialist |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ support organisations ○ when the older person is dying, especially when family conflict evident ○ clergy identification | |
| 10.30am | Morning Tea | |
| 10.45am | Workshop 1: <i>The Relevance of Past, Present and Future for Older People</i> OR Workshop 2: <i>Ministry to the Families of Older Persons</i> | Specialist Anglican Homes Chaplain |
| 11.30 | Feedback from Workshops Days 1 and 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General discussion on issues discussed. | |
| 11.45 | Presentation: <i>Inter-Generational Relationships – A Way Forward?</i> | Julie Barrett-Lennard |
| 12.30 | Lunch | |
| 1.15pm | Small Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants be asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ discuss what they believe, or perceive to be, the disadvantages and advantages of inter-generational relationships, and develop suggestions of how they might work, or work better, in their Parish ○ develop a theology of ageing (ie biblical basis for the Church, including participants present, of being pro-active in caring for older persons). | |
| 2.00pm | Feedback From Small Groups | |
| 2.30pm | Presentation: <i>Liturgies for Older Persons</i> | Anglican Homes Chaplain |
| 3.15pm | Afternoon tea | |
| 3.30pm | Individual Creative Reflection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants be invited to reflect upon, and write down, some responses to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How might my Church better respond to older persons? ○ What are some of the things I might be able to do differently now to before the training course? ○ How might I try and reach out to non Church, or the estranged, older persons? ○ Are inter-generational relationships, especially mentoring programmes, worth trying in my Parish? ○ I want to do something, but can't do it all. What can I do with the human and financial resources I have? | |
| 4.00pm | Plenary Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenters be available to respond to any queries or comments. | All presenters |
| 4.20pm | EVALUATION AND PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES | Julie Barrett-Lennard |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants be asked to complete Evaluation Form and place in box provided. This form would also seek feedback on whether further training would be welcome, and if so, specifically what areas of ministry to older persons (such as people with dementia) • Hand out attendance certificate to those who have attended for both days • Interested participants be given a bibliography of appropriate reading material and websites with respect to the pastoral and spiritual care of older persons, and information about relevant national organisations such as the Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies (CAPS). | |
| 4.30pm | Close with Benediction | Anglican Homes Chaplain |

6.3 Advertising Leaflet for Training Programme

Please see the following insert for advertising leaflet.

6.4 Examples of Case Studies to be Used in the Training Programme

Case Study One

You start making contact with some older persons within your Parish boundaries who you never see at Church. Some of these older persons accept your invitation of a "cuppa and chat". After several visits you begin to see a common theme or thread in the conversations.

"I don't go to Church but I read my Bible every night before I go to sleep."

"I don't go to Church but I say my prayers every morning and night."

"I don't go to Church because when I was a child I was forced to go. But I still believe in God though."

Questions

How might you start to respond to these people with the view of helping them connect their spirituality, and/or belief in God, with your Church?

What would be your reasons for doing that?

What might the obstacles be?

What could you offer them if they did come to Church?

The rationale behind this case study is to generate discussion amongst course participants on the issue of evangelism to non church older persons.²⁴³ It is envisioned that some of the discussion would focus upon the following issues emanating from this research.

- The value of trying to find out why the older persons in the case study stopped going to Church (money issues, inadequate or poor biblical teaching, confusion

²⁴³ See discussion on evangelism to non church older persons in Chapter 2.2 and in Chapter 5.4.

over changes within the Church, conflict with leadership or other Church members), and what obstacles/resistances there might be by the older persons to return to Church.

- Part of the presentation at 10.00am on Day One will define spirituality/spiritual and religion and will explain why they are deemed to be separate.²⁴⁴ It is envisaged that this case study will evoke discussion surrounding the separation of religion and spirituality and how that might apply to older persons such as those in the case study who still read the bible, pray and believe in God but who are not part of a religious body.
- In the 11.30am session on Day One course participants will be informed of the valuable contribution spirituality and/or religion can make to a person's overall wellbeing, particularly older persons where mental health issues such as depression often become more pronounced.²⁴⁵ It is envisaged that this case study will stimulate discussion in order to elucidate participants' own thoughts on this issue and whether this issue is one that would encourage them to reach out to non church older persons.
- Given that older persons such as those in the case study may not have been to Church in a long time, this case study asks participants to discuss how they might integrate these older persons people into their faith community given many aspects of Church might appear strange to them.

²⁴⁴ See discussions on the definitions of spirituality and religion in Chapters 1.2.2 and 1.2.3.

²⁴⁵ See discussion on the relationship between positive mental health and religion and/or spirituality in Chapter 2.2.

Case Study Two

A couple who have been fairly regular worshippers, and reasonably involved in various Church activities, have recently retired at age 60. You have observed over time that this couple is easily lured away from Sunday worship and other Church events by other interests. This is happening even more frequently now they have retired. They both enjoy good health and a comfortable lifestyle.

Questions

What might you do to support this couple in the initial phase of retirement?

What might you do to encourage them to be more involved in worship and other Church activities?

What other ways might you support this couple?

The rationale behind this case study is to encourage course participants to discuss the issues surrounding the Young Old as they approach and then enter retirement.²⁴⁶ It is envisaged discussion will include some of the following issues emanating from this research.

- How course participants believe their Church can create opportunities for the couple in the case study to use some of their new available time to be involved in Church activities or ministry
- The benefits the above might provide to the older persons (eg helping them to still feel a sense of belonging and being valued).
- What the participants might offer this couple as a way of recognising retirement as

²⁴⁶ See Figure 4.7.3 that illustrates the combined spiritual and pastoral needs of the Young Old, and the discussion in Chapter 5.2 on the impact of retirement on the Young Old.

a significant "moment of passage" in their life.

- How participants might respond to the spiritual, and perhaps worship, needs of this group of people given these were among the needs of the Young Old identified by survey participants.²⁴⁷

Case Study Three

Mrs Marshall, now 80, has been a long time faithful member of your Parish. People begin to notice that she doesn't come to Church much any more, despite being offered transport and being invited to sit where it's most comfortable for her, and most easiest for her to see and hear. The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator has rung her twice but Mrs Marshall keeps insisting nothing is wrong, saying she's just having a little break from Church. Eventually the Rector calls on her and spends some time sitting and chatting over a cuppa. Eventually Mrs Marshall confides in the Rector that she has stopped going to Church because they were introducing too many new things, such as new songs ("I like the old hymns") and inter-active sermons ("I like the Minister to stand up there and tell me what to believe"). Mrs Marshall adds that Mr Smith told her a lay person took him Home Communion and she's horrified that one might do the same for her ("I don't think that's right. It's the Priest's job. Just wouldn't be the same with a lay person").

²⁴⁷ Figures 4.7.1 and 4.7.3.

Questions

How might the Priest, and Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, begin to respond to Mrs Marshall's concerns?

How might the Church be a source of stability for older persons like Mrs Marshall whilst not forfeiting trying new things?

The rationale behind this case study is to encourage course participants to grapple with the impact change can have on older persons, particularly the Older Old.²⁴⁸ It is envisaged this discussion will include some of the points emanating from this research.

- Older persons may not have grasped the value of PAs as valid representatives of the Church – and of God. It is envisaged course participants will suggest ways in which they might respond to how Mrs Marshall feels. For example, she may require a number of visits by the clergy to help her make this transition, and maybe one or two by the clergy and PA together where they all share Home Communion together, perhaps with the PA leading as a way to help the older person make the transition to better accepting lay leadership.
- By sharing ideas, it is hoped course participants will come up with some ways in which Mrs Marshall can be supported. For example, help her to understand some of the changes such as the important role of PAs, introduce a mid week service that has more traditional hymns, liturgy and a sermon, and encourage her to accept the offer of transport to Church perhaps once a month as a way of staying connected to the rest of the faith community.

Discussion may also elicit comments such as the following which I have learnt through my own experiences, and from miscellaneous comments from survey participants.

- Many older persons do not like to feel they have become a problem, and therefore

²⁴⁸ See discussion in Chapter 5.3 on the impact of change on older persons.

need some reassurance that the Church still cares and wants them to feel part of the body of Christ.

- Phone calls are not always the most effective way of following up on people who have stopped coming to Church. It is often through visiting that the Church leader can read body language, pick up clues in a longer conversation, or see whether there might be something that has changed in the person's physical ability that prevents them getting to Church.
- People are not always able to express the real reasons for a particular behaviour unless given time to build up the confidence to be honest. Visiting can better facilitate that.

6.5 Feedback Form

FEEDBACK

**TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR MINISTRY TO
OLDER PERSONS IN INDEPENDENT LIVING
WOLLASTON COLLEGE, MT CLAREMONT
MAY 2006**

NAME (optional)

I came to this training programme because
.....

What I found most helpful was
.....
because

What I found the least helpful was
.....
because

I would be interested to attend further training **Yes** **No**
If yes, please list some of the areas you would like covered

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Please offer any other comments
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

*Please place this form in the box provided at the door
Thank you for your contribution*

CHAPTER SEVEN

..... *the area of aged ministry is very fertile ground for spirituality.* (Survey response)

7. CONCLUSION

It is clear from evidence cited in the Introduction that Australia is not immune from the unprecedented growth in contemporary western society's ageing population. As a result, the Churches in Australia are going to be affected both by having more older persons within their congregations, and by more older persons living within society in general who may need support from the Church. However, evidence also suggests that the Church has not been as alert as it could have been to either the fact that society is experiencing an "ageing explosion", or to the potential opportunities available in ministry to and by older persons. Responses to this survey further confirm that ministry to older persons is at an embryonic stage and much more needs to be done to educate and equip Church leaders in how they can respond more pastorally and effectively to the ageing population.

One of the ways being identified in which the Church can respond more pastorally to older persons is to be a leader in breaking the mould of negative stereotyping of the latter years within its own network of people. Given that many Churches consist of a high percentage of older persons, it is believed that if they model positive attitudes toward ageing, this may filter through to the wider society. A potential benefit to older persons is that they are likely to feel more valued, which in turn can help enhance their self esteem and help them retain greater dignity. Reversing negative stereotyping may only necessitate minor changes, such as not colluding with those who speak derogatively, or joke, about being older, and being mindful of terminology when writing about older persons or old age.

This research also identified that the Church will increasingly have a role to play in the lives of older persons, and quite possibly with the family of older persons. Examples of these roles will become evident as this Conclusion summarises the key points arising from the Literature Review and Discussion.

Two significant issues with respect to the pastoral care of Older Old persons in independent living were identified. One was the loneliness and isolation often experienced by the Older Old once they are disconnected from mainstream society, including the Church. Many survey participants recognised this need but felt restricted by the lack of human resources to undertake adequate and/or additional pastoral visiting. A number of participants expressed concern that their Parish was struggling to meet current visiting (and other pastoral) needs because of a lack of human resources. In an attempt to address this, it was suggested that clergy and lay pastoral workers undergo appropriate training to enable them to learn specific skills that would give them greater confidence in relating to older persons. It was recognised that visiting brought many benefits to older persons, particularly the assurance that neither God nor the Church has forgotten them and that they were still considered a valuable member of the faith community. Alongside the need to provide ministry to the Older Old, it was also recognised that some people in this age group can actually provide various forms of active or passive ministry. Each opportunity provided to these older persons has the potential to enhance their sense of belonging and value, and lessen the sense of isolation and loneliness they often feel.

Both scholarship and survey responses demonstrated that issues for the Young Old have a different emphasis to those of the Older Old. Retirement and its consequential effects are clearly prominent features for many in the Young Old age group, with the

transition into retirement recognised as a significant "moment of passage" in many people's life. This is often particularly so for the newly retirees who, by virtue of a significant change in lifestyle, often struggle with issues of loss and grief. Their losses include the identity their employment gave them, sometimes the status that came with employment, the loss of a distinct purpose, and in many people's lives, the loss of the benefits and security a regular income can provide. There was also recognition from survey participants that many Young Old are still able to contribute practically to society and therefore the Church needed to avail itself of these people before they became over committed with other social or leisure activities. This discussion highlighted the vital role the Church has during this early period of retirement, such as offering some form of liturgical recognition upon retirement, providing support networks during the initial early period of retirement, and helping new retirees find meaning and purpose in a new way through involvement in parish activities and ministry. This latter opportunity can assist the Young Old to retain a sense of belonging and a sense of being valued at a time when they may be feeling newly vulnerable in those areas. Country Churches need to take into consideration the specific needs of rural people. For example, there is an important role for the Church to play in helping retiring farmers make the enormous transition from a lifetime of busy farm work to having no regular commitments and the potential emotional difficulties this may bring.

This research also identified the impact various forms of change can have on older persons. Some participants believed that change is the reason why many older persons withdraw, or have withdrawn, from the Church. Changes in worship, the way clergy present themselves, and the increasing involvement of PAs in visitation (including providing Holy Communion) were recognised as areas where older persons are

particularly struggling with change. A number of scholars and participants believed older persons are able to change and will do so if time is spent helping them understand it. Other participants recognised some things may need to remain constant for older persons in order to provide them with some stability at a time when there are many other changes occurring in their lives. It would seem the solution is not for the Church to avoid change, or to dismiss older persons because they struggle with change, but to handle change creatively and sensitively in order to minimise its impact on older persons and to as best as possible keep them within the faith community.

The issue of reaching out to non church older persons was seen by scholars to be an important ministry in which the Church needs to engage. Survey results suggested the Church has been perhaps unaware of this vast area of potential outreach. That is, although a high proportion of older persons remain in their own home, participants identified only a very small percentage of housebound of whom they were aware. This shows that there is a challenge here for the Church to explore ways of reaching out to those older persons who may have withdrawn from active Church life for whatever reason. Reconnecting with these older persons offers many potential benefits to the Church and to the older persons themselves. For example, it may provide older persons who are estranged from the Church with an opportunity to discuss reasons why they have withdrawn, thus providing the possibility of reconciliation. It may also provide them with the support needed during a time when mental health issues such as depression often become more pronounced because of some of the affects of ageing. As with visiting in general, it was recognised that evangelism poses a challenge to Churches that are already operating with limited human resources if it means a major new outreach programme. This was particularly recognised as an issue in Churches that do not have full time clergy, especially in country regions where Local Priests and

Deacons have minimal time available to undertake additional pastoral responsibilities. It may be, however, that some Churches need to consider whether they are creatively and adequately using the proven and potential resources often available amongst their adult population where ministry to older persons can be provided by older persons. Churches may discover that there are more human resources available than realised. Further, if ways could be found to reconnect older non church persons with the Church, they in time may wish to become involved in some form of active or passive ministry. For these reasons at least, it would seem that evangelism to non church older persons is too important not to be given serious consideration because of the potential benefits to both the older persons and to the Church.

The concept of inter-generational relationships within the Church community has evoked some creative discussion from contemporary scholars and gerontologists, and elicited some fruitful responses from participants. According to survey results, inter-generational relationships are occurring within a large number of Anglican Parishes, but more often they are the focus of special occasions rather than being a regular part of Church life. The concept of older persons being mentors for younger people was suggested by both scholars and survey participants as a way of encouraging inter-generational relationships, although some preferred the term "spiritual friendships" as they felt this better reflected the intent of the relationship trying to be developed. It was argued that one of the major benefits of developing these friendships is that many older persons know the Church's story and can thus be an important resource for keeping "the story" alive through younger generations. Whilst not entirely opposing the idea, some survey participants expressed caution over this mentoring relationship because they felt young people, particularly those in the teen years, might not respond to being mentored by an older person. As there is currently very little research

available on how young people would respond to being mentored by older persons, the concept would benefit from further research and discussion. A survey of younger people themselves would provide data that would give a balanced perspective on the notion of inter-generational relationships, particularly the idea of mentoring. The concept of "Adopt-a-Grandparent" was also suggested by both scholars and survey participants as a concept worth exploring within Churches as a way of addressing the complex structure of relationships evident in contemporary families whereby young people often do not have much, or any, access to a biological grandparent. It was recognised that there are benefits to both the younger and older generations, and to the Church in these relationships. Despite the reservations expressed by some participants, there are clearly some potential benefits to both the younger and older generations, and to the Church in developing inter-generational relationships. Perhaps most particularly, if each generation is given the opportunity to contribute to the life of the Church, a faith community is created that is a true body of Christ where all humankind is represented and where each generation can use their gifts and experiences to support the others. Alongside that, there is scope for age-specific activities to also occur in order to meet particular needs and interests of each group. This area would benefit from more research given it has only recently emerged for discussion in the public arena.

Some additional ways were suggested as to how the Church can look with "fresh eyes" at responding more pastorally to older persons. One way is by revising some of the liturgy in *A Prayer Book for Australia*. For example, there is a need to separate older persons from groups such as the poor and neglected, from the infirm, bereaved, lonely, sick and suffering, and to no longer refer to older persons as if their service to the Church had ceased. Another way is for the Anglican Diocese of Perth to change the

heading in the Pastoral Handbook that implies all housebound older persons receiving Holy Communion are sick. Whilst these changes may appear only minor, they would make a significant contribution in changing negative perceptions of, and attitudes toward, older persons, thus modelling to society in general a new way of visioning the latter years. The third way the Church can better respond pastorally to the ageing population is to grapple with its role in supporting families. This support can be to the older members of a family whose adult children are too busy to provide a lot of care and support, and to the adult children themselves who may be experiencing feelings of guilt over not providing sufficient care and support to older parents. Although there are many caring and support agencies within society, it is anticipated they will not have the human or financial resources to meet the increasing need of older persons ageing in their own home without familial support. Survey results suggested that the Anglican Diocese of Perth has not yet recognised this potential large area of ministry. Thus it would auger well for the Diocese to heed the warnings now emerging that the Church will be called upon to respond pastorally to the complexity of family relationships within contemporary western society and to thus provide various support to a number of generations.

In order to bring the above issues to the awareness of clergy and lay pastoral care workers, and for them to be given knowledge and tools to adequately respond to the ageing population, scholars are strongly encouraging Churches to ensure their leaders are adequately trained in the area of the pastoral care of older persons. However, results from this survey demonstrated there has been, and still is, limited training available in the Diocese of Perth with respect to ministry to older persons. Training that has been provided has been short term, or "on request" only. On the other hand, a high percentage of survey participants expressed a strong desire for specific and

regular training to be available because many recognised that there will be an increase in older persons in their congregations. These participants indicated they felt ill equipped to respond to the various needs of older persons. A high percentage of participants provided useful comments on ways this training would be most effective in encouraging clergy and lay pastoral workers to attend. These comments are reflected in the structure of a trial training programme provided in Chapter 6. The argument is also strong for non religious teaching institutions to be encouraged to include pastoral and spiritual care of older persons in their aged care training in order to ensure a wholistic approach to caring for older persons.

In conclusion, I believe this thesis has demonstrated that Churches within the Anglican Diocese of Perth (and indeed, Churches elsewhere) must respond more seriously and creatively to the ageing population. The Anglican Diocese of Perth must also heed the voices of the survey participants who strongly called for training in the area of pastoral care to older persons. Further, as this research did not interview older persons, there would be benefit in additional studies being undertaken where a cross section of older persons were interviewed in order to gain their perspective on some of the issues raised in this thesis. In addition, further scrutiny of the results from the surveys conducted for this research would no doubt produce material for a number of research topics. Such ongoing research will hopefully ensure the issue of the pastoral care of older persons, and the importance of training in this area, remain an ongoing area of discussion amongst scholars, gerontologists, and the Church. For as Douglas Hare aptly warns:

*.....we neglect the ministry to the elderly at our peril – and theirs.*²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹ Douglas Hare, in Rob Merchant, “‘Bless the Aged!’ - A Response”, *Wycliffe Hall Newsletter* (Oxford: Wycliffe Hall, 2000), 17. Cf a comment by a participant in this research survey “We underestimate older people and their value to the community and we underestimate them to our cost”.

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY QUESTIONS–CLERGY/LAY PASTORAL WORKERS

INTERVIEW NO:

DATE:

**RESPONDING PASTORALLY TO
THE AGEING POPULATION:
A PROPOSED TRAINING PROGRAMME
FOR CLERGY AND PASTORAL WORKERS**

SURVEY QUESTIONS
CLERGY/LAY PASTORAL WORKERS

Reverend Julie Barrett-Lennard

2004

(1a) **There is some training currently available in Western Australia with respect to older persons. Can you please indicate whether you have heard about those I am about to name, and have completed any of them.**

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Heard about | Completed |
| Dementia Care Anglican Homes: Sir James McCusker Training Foundation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Heard about | Completed |
| Understanding the Spiritual Needs of Older People Anglican Homes Chaplaincy Service | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Heard about | Completed |
| Community Services (Aged Care) course at TAFE | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Heard about | Completed |
| Pastoral Assistants Training Days (with input from Anglican Homes) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(1b) **IF YES to any of the above, how adequate was this training for you?**

Dementia Care

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not at all | Fair | Average | Good | Very good | Excellent |

Understanding the Spiritual Needs of Older People

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not at all | Fair | Average | Good | Very good | Excellent |

TAFE

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not at all | Fair | Average | Good | Very good | Excellent |

Pastoral Assistants Training Days

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not at all | Fair | Average | Good | Very good | Excellent |

What was good about it?²⁵⁰

How could you see it being improved?

²⁵⁰ The number of lines in this Appendix are representative only – more were provided in the original survey documentation.

(1c) **Did factors such as cost, time, distance, prevent you from doing any of these training programmes?**

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Time | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cost | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Distance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

(2a) **Have you participated in any other specialist training in the spiritual and/or pastoral care of older persons, and if so, what was that?**

IF YES, how adequate was this training for you?

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not at all | Fair | Average | Good | Very good | Excellent |

What was good about it?

How could you see it being improved?

(2b) **If participated in other training, do you have a copy of any material from that training that you would be happy to provide to me?**

(3) What percentage of your parishioners (own home or independent living facility) would be:
60-75 _____
76+ _____

(4a) What percentage of your parishioners, including those with whom you may have only minimal contact, are mostly housebound, ie unable to come to Church either at all or on a regular basis?

(4b) Is the Parish able to provide them with any ministry, and if so, what is that ministry?

4(c) What percentage of ministry is provided BY people over 60 in your Parish?

What ministry roles does this involve?

4(d) Recognising that all ministry is fruitful, can you identify some particularly fruitful avenues of ministry TO AND BY older persons in your Parish?

(5a) What do you perceive to be the primary spiritual and pastoral needs of the Young Old (60-75) in your Parish?

(5b) If you had unlimited resources (financial or human), can you envisage ways of better meeting or addressing these needs?

(5c) Given you probably don't have unlimited resources, how well do you believe your Parish is able to address or meet these needs?

(6a) What do you perceive to be the primary spiritual and pastoral needs of the Older Old (76+) in your Parish?

(6b) If you had unlimited resources (financial or human), can you envisage ways of better meeting or addressing these needs?

(6c) Given you probably don't have unlimited resources, how well do you believe your Parish is able to address or meet these needs?

(7) Of all the needs, do you see ways in which some areas could be improved in your Parish?

(8a) If further specific training in ministry to older persons was available, and you were interested and able to attend, what time frame would be your preference?

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Half day | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Full day | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week day | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Saturday | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Two whole days | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Evening | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intensive course such as Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in aged care? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(8b) Why have you chosen that option?

(8c) Are there factors that would prohibit you attending such training?

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Time | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Cost | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Distance | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |

IF YES to any of above, what would make it possible – that is, what would make time/cost/distance not an issue?

- (9) Research indicates that one of the spiritual needs of older persons is a sense of belonging. In what ways do you see that a sense of belonging could be further fostered in your Parish?**

- (10a) In his stages of the human life span, Erik Erikson has identified that one of the social needs of older persons is to be inter-generational people. That is, to engage with people from all age cycles of life. Are there ways that is already happening in your Parish, or how do you envisage this being able to happen in your Parish?**

- (10b) Do you believe that young people – either in general or in your parish - would be interested in inter-generational activities and relationships, and could you give reasons for your answer?**

- (11) Did your training for ordination include ministry to older persons?
NO – would you have liked it to?
YES - was it useful for your later ministry to older persons?**

- (12) Are you happy to provide your postcode as a way of distinguishing between city and country parishes/aged care facilities? IF YES:**

- (13) Do you wish to make any other comment about what we have been discussing, or on any other issue relating to ministry to older persons?**

APPENDIX 2: LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Division of Arts
School of Social Sciences and Humanities

[Date]

Dear xxxxxx

RESPONDING PASTORALLY TO THE AGEING POPULATION: A PROPOSED TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR CLERGY AND PASTORAL WORKERS

I am undertaking a Research Masters degree at Murdoch University under the supervision of Dr Nancy Ault. The aim of my research is to:

- determine what training programmes are available within Western Australia to meet those needs;
- identify what the training/education needs of Anglican clergy and lay pastoral workers are with respect to ministry to older persons;
- identify the gap between what is needed and what exists.
- develop the basis for a training programme that addresses this gap which will be sufficiently generic to be able to be adapted for use in other Churches and aged care facilities.

This research project has developed as a result of a Masters in Theology original research project I undertook in 2000 entitled *Spiritual "Which Way" For The Elderly? What is the direction of spiritual care for the elderly in the Anglican Church in Perth?* This project identified that clergy and lay pastoral workers could be better equipped to recognise and respond to the spiritual needs of older persons given the increasing number of older persons in society, and thus the Church. Further, between mid 2001 and mid 2003, I collaborated on a report commissioned by the Diocese entitled *A Survey on Ministry with Older People Within the Diocese of Perth*. One of the recommendations of the report, passed at the 2003 Synod, was that "training (including an approach to the systematic evaluation of ministry to older persons) which complements existing opportunities and resources be developed to specifically address issues relating to older people". Both my research project and the Diocesan survey highlighted the need for more adequate training in the area of ministry to older persons.

I am therefore writing to ask you whether you would be willing to participate in an interview in which I would ask you a series of questions concerning ministry to older persons. If you agree to participate, I would like to arrange a meeting with you for this purpose. I anticipate the meeting would not exceed one hour. I would also like your permission to tape record the interview for research purposes. You would be free to withdraw your consent to participate in this project at any time. All information given during the interview will remain confidential and no names or other information that might identify you will be used in any publication arising from the research. If appropriate, I would also welcome the opportunity to meet with and interview lay pastoral workers who provide ministry to older persons, or who have a particular interest in this ministry. I would be happy to provide a summary of my research findings if requested by you.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the details in the attached Consent Form and return to me in the enclosed stamped, self addressed envelope by [date – three weeks from date of letter]. I will then contact you with respect to a meeting time.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact either myself on 9331 2802, or my Supervisor, Dr Nancy Ault, on 9360 2602. My Supervisor and I are happy to discuss with you any concerns you may have on how this study is conducted, or alternatively you can contact Murdoch University's Human Research Ethics Committee on 9360 6677.

Yours sincerely
(Reverend) Julie Barrett-Lennard

Encl

APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANTS' CONSENT FORM

Division of Arts
School of Social Sciences and Humanities

CONSENT FORM

Responding Pastorally to the Ageing Population: A Proposed Training Programme for Clergy and Pastoral Workers

I,, have read the information above. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this activity, however, I know that I may change my mind and withdraw at any time.

I understand that all information provided is treated as confidential and will not be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree do not agree for this interview to be taped (please tick one)

I agree that research data gathered for this study may be published provided my name or other information which might identify me is not used.

I would like a summary of the research results (please tick if yes)

Signed: **Participant:** _____

Date: _____

Chief Investigator: _____

Date: _____

Investigator's Name: _____

APPENDIX 4: SURVEY QUESTIONS–DIRECTOR CHAPLAINCY SERVICES

INTERVIEW NO:

DATE:

**RESPONDING PASTORALLY TO
THE AGEING POPULATION:
A PROPOSED TRAINING PROGRAMME
FOR CLERGY AND PASTORAL WORKERS**

SURVEY QUESTIONS

DIRECTOR CHAPLAINCY SERVICES

Reverend Julie Barrett-Lennard

2004

(1) **What training is currently available in Western Australia to equip and/or support parish/congregational based ministry to older persons?²⁵¹**

(2) **What training is currently available to equip and/or support clergy and other lay pastoral workers ministering in AGED CARE FACILITIES?**

(3) **What is the aim of the training you have available?**

(4) **What do you believe is the most urgent area of training required to equip people to minister to older persons?**

(5) **In your years of attending and giving training for ministry to older persons, what aspects have you found most helpful?**

What have you found least helpful?

(6) **Do you believe those responsible for training clergy, and clergy themselves, appreciate the many and varied issues older persons have to deal with?**

IF NO, do you have any suggestions for raising the profile and urgency of this area of ministry?

²⁵¹ The number of lines in this Appendix are representative only – more were provided in the original survey documentation.

(7a) What do you perceive are the primary spiritual and pastoral needs of the Young Old (60-75)?

(7b) If there were unlimited human and/or financial resources, how would you envisage ways of better meeting or addressing these needs?

(7c) Given there usually aren't unlimited human and financial resources, how well do you believe these needs are met?

(8a) What do you perceive are the primary spiritual and pastoral needs of the Older Old (76+)?

8(b) If there were unlimited human and/or financial resources, how would you envisage ways of better meeting or addressing these needs?

8(c) Given there aren't unlimited human and financial resources, how well do you believe these needs are met?

(9) Research indicates that one of the spiritual needs of older persons is a sense of belonging. In what ways do you see that a sense of belonging could be further fostered in Parishes?

(10a) In his stages of the human life span, Erik Erikson has identified that one of the social needs of older persons is to be inter-generational people. That is, to engage with people from all age cycles of life. How do you envisage this best being able to happen in Parishes?

(10b) Do you believe that young people – either in general or in your parish - would be interested in inter-generational activities and relationships, and could you give reasons for your answer?

(11) When you look back to the training you received in preparation for Ordination, would you have wanted some portion of that training to have included ministry to older persons?

(12) Do you wish to make any other comment about what we have been discussing, or on any other issue relating to ministry to older persons?

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Third International Conference on Spirituality and Ageing hosted by the Centre for Ageing Pastoral Studies, Adelaide, September 27 to October 1 2004.

PAPERS PRESENTED DURING CANDIDATURE

Sound The Bugle: How Awake Is The Church In Responding To The Spiritual And Pastoral Needs Of An Ageing Population?, presented as a preliminary paper to the Network for Critical Ageing Studies (NCAS), Murdoch University, 14 September 2004.

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Summary of preliminary results to theology postgraduate seminar, Murdoch University, 13 May 2005.