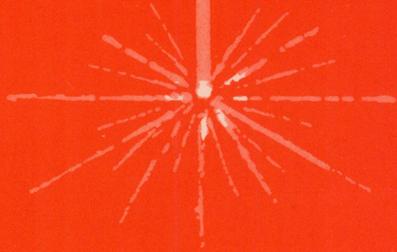
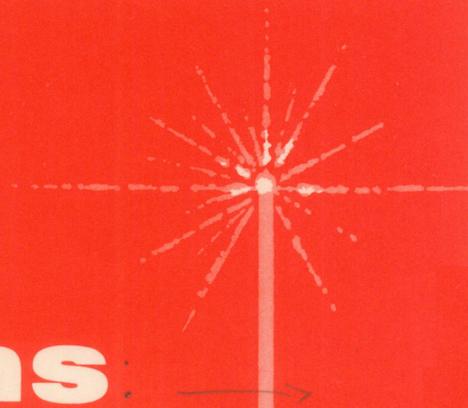


Old age  
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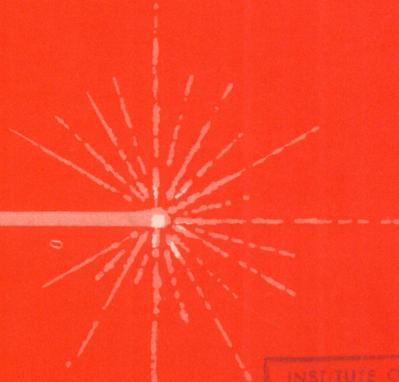


# creating opportunities

# for older persons:



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
Welfare Administration  
Office of Aging



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SELECTED PAPERS FROM THE FOURTH ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE OF STATE EXECUTIVES ON AGING

APRIL 27-29, 1964  
Washington, D.C. //

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
~~Welfare Administration~~ Office of Aging

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## Foreword

"Creating Opportunities for Older Persons" was the theme of the Fourth Annual Conference of State Executives on Aging, held at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C., on April 27-29, 1964. It was also the theme for Senior Citizens Month during May.

This publication includes the major papers which were presented at the conference. Space did not permit publishing the summaries of the discussions which followed the delivery of the six papers, nor of the two panel discussions on "The Planning Process Applied" and "Resources and Techniques for Implementing Plans."

One of the highlights of the conference was a series of resource information clinics on "Involving Universities," "Involving Voluntary Agencies," "Involving Older People," "Using Public Media," and "Federal Assistance Programs for Aging." While many of the conference participants testified to the great value of these clinics, unfortunately they did not lend themselves to reporting in a proceedings of this kind.

Preceding the conference, the National Association of State Units on Aging held its organizational meeting, elected officers and outlined by-laws; and, on the afternoon of April 28, it held its first formal meeting.

The program committee for the conference included Elsie C. Alves, Executive Director, Georgia State Commission on Aging; Donald L. Bechhart, Executive Director, Kentucky Commission on Aging; Elias Cohen, Commissioner, Office for the Aging, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare; Dr. George E. Davis, Chairman, Indiana Commission on Aging and the Aged; Verna Due, Regional Representative of the Office of Aging in the Chicago Regional Office of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; Marcelle G. Levy, Administrator, New York State Office for the Aging; Francis Looney, Executive Secretary, Massachusetts Council for the Aging; James McMichael, Executive Director, Wisconsin Commission on Aging; Mrs. A. M. G. Russell, Chairman, California Citizens' Advisory Committee on Aging. H. Burton Aycock, Regional Representative of the Office of Aging in the Charlottesville Regional Office of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, both served on the program committee and acted as program coordinator.

Plans are now being made for the Fifth Conference of State Executives on Aging to be held at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C., on May 2-5, 1965. It will be followed by a meeting of the National Association of State Units on Aging.

Donald P. Kent  
Director, Office of Aging

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## The First Steps Toward Action

By Wayne Vasey, Ph.D., Dean, George Warren Brown  
School of Social Work, Washington University, St. Louis

In an address at the Arden House Conference on state-level planning for older people in 1961, the Hon. George M. Leader, former governor of Pennsylvania, made a statement with reference to the need for planning for services to the aged which, at first glance, appears to be a paradox. He said, "We have been challenged to rediscover the place in society for older men and women. We need new adaptations to secure the rights of older people that a complex society demands. We need planning to avoid chaos and, as radical as it may seem, it is through planning and order that we secure greater freedom."

The allegation that planning, instead of restricting freedom within an organization, actually promotes it, is the seeming paradox. Yet, in actual fact, the orderly mobilization of resources, based upon a carefully thought-out design, can have the effect of creating greater freedom. It permits the use of individual and collective energies in the furtherance of the central purpose of the program.

When planning is inadequate there seems to be a tendency to attempt to restrict or control the actions of staff in an effort to achieve some degree of order within the program. If attention is fixed on objectives, rather than on methods, however, an enlightened administration can permit greater individuality of action within the limits of the agency's goals.

There are many ways of tracing the development of services. One formulation which I find useful derives from the meanings of the terms "cause," "movement," and "program." Let us examine how these terms operate.

A cause may develop when a person or a group of persons becomes vitally concerned over a problem which has been neglected. This is the way in which many of our services have first developed. Seldom do we have mass consensus at the outset. The people who take up the cause have zeal,

drive, and force, frequently with a kind of shrill stridency which may get on people's nerves and may even irritate them into action. The cause has a single-minded quality, a devotion which brooks no opposition.

A classic prototype of this stage of development is represented by the work of Dorothea Dix on behalf of the mentally ill in the 19th century. Almost singlehanded, she carried the banner for better services to people in "insane asylums." Anyone familiar with the work of Abraham Epstein on behalf of the aged must realize how he and his associates made the problem of the aging a cause to which they devoted themselves with unflagging devotion.

Out of the efforts of a few may come the mobilization of a larger part of society. The cause may be taken up by many and gain the momentum of a movement. The loss, measured in terms of diminution of what is frequently almost a fanatical zeal, is more than made up by the increase in power as a larger number of citizens become concerned and put their weight behind the solution of a problem or the meeting of a need.

This leads to a formal expression through organized services, which become programs. I believe that if we examine many of the programs which we today take for granted--social security, child welfare services, special programs for the aged, help for the mentally retarded, and others--we shall see that they've had their genesis in the initial efforts of a few to attract the attention and support of the many.

There is real danger that, as programs develop, the thrust, the drive, the zeal that has actuated those who first work for the cause, may be submerged in the details of operation of the services. It is not difficult to let this happen. I have heard this expressed as becoming "program, rather than people, conscious."

The program may become a flight into activities which provides its own reassurance because of their requirement of commitment of time and energy. There are lots of meetings, many projects, innumerable special activities. We find ourselves caught up in the daily round of these demands whether or not they are related to the total design or purpose of the organization. As students of bureaucracy have on more than one occasion noted, procedures or methods are substituted for the ends or purposes of the program. They may become their own excuse for being.

Perhaps as we examine ex-Governor Leader's comments about avoidance of chaos, we need to consider also the necessity to avoid orderliness for its own sake, preoccupation with a neat, well-ordered design, whether or not it is serving an ultimate objective or well-planned purpose.

It is possible that advisory, coordinating agencies, like many of those represented here today, are less in danger of being bogged down in a mass of program operation than are those which are charged with a specific operational function. There are undoubtedly both advantages and disadvantages in this status. An operating organization, which has a specific service to render like financial assistance, does have the advantage of a starting point with something explicit in terms of its charge and assignment. With imagination and vision it can move from this into other areas and enlarge its area of service, but it may also be caught up in the detail of the program with which it is charged.

The coordinating agency, perhaps, does have a disadvantage in lacking such an explicit point of reference from which to start its services. At the same time, however, it may have greater scope of action in choosing priorities and direction because it isn't tied to a specific service. From general observation, though, I would infer that the outcome in terms of creativeness and initiative through planning is more an attribute of the behavior of those responsible for the program, rather than of the specific nature of that program.

To recapitulate what we have said thus far about planning, it is an orderly method of achieving organizational consensus. It makes it possible to achieve a deployment of individual and collective energies within the organization toward fulfillment of these

purposes. It permits the focusing of attention upon purposes rather than methods. It meets a need, not only for the organization, but for the individuals within that organization.

Any person who still sees in this statement a paradox might ponder the following comment by Karl Mannheim:<sup>1</sup>

We are gradually coming to realize that the contemporary forces which have led to the development of social technique express the desire of the human mind to control, not merely its environment, but also, through the latter, itself. Half-hearted techniques lead to the enslavement of mankind; fully considered techniques to a higher level of freedom.

While I realize that we have by no means disposed of the question of the meaning of planning, I believe that we must go on to consideration of its characteristics. The first of these I would designate as planning with rather than for people. This process may become increasingly difficult as programs develop their own technical requirements and, consequently, as those who master the techniques become experts, with a resultant lessening of effective communication with those not equally specialized. This is a real dilemma in our society today. In order to deal with the many and complex problems of such groups as the older persons in the population, it is necessary to evolve an ever-increasing volume of knowledge. In so doing, we run the risk of putting understanding beyond the reach of the public which the program is serving, and we must remind ourselves that the program still does belong to the public.

The specialist or "expert" may develop what I have come to term "technical myopia." He may lose sight of the larger values of the community as he becomes increasingly immersed in mastering the technical details of his own processes. Some have contended that the expert is virtually disabled in relation to broad-scale planning by this tendency. This point of view was expressed by Harold J. Laski in an article in Harper's Magazine in 1930 called "The Limitations of the Expert." He insisted that the expert sacrifices "the insight of common sense to the intensity of

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<sup>1</sup> Mannheim, Karl, Man and a Society in an Age of Reconstruction, New York, Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1941, as quoted in "The Planning of Change," Warren G. Bennis, Kenneth D. Benne, and Robert Chin, eds.

his experience." He is alleged to be incapable of seeing beyond processes into the ultimate outcome of those processes.

This is probably more accurately stated as a danger rather than an inevitable result of expertness or specialization, but it does stress the fact that failure to look at the total community and its values, in relation to planning, can lead to unfortunate results.

Planning with whom? Certainly we don't ignore the group of the aging themselves, the people directly affected. This point has been stressed so many times that I don't think it needs anything beyond a mention here.

One group I want to single out particularly in this context is the political leadership of a state. In social welfare, we are sometimes inclined to regard the politician as ipso facto a suspicious character, cynical, unconcerned with the welfare of people, and intent only on his own advancement. Like most stereotypes, this one is certainly open to question. Without attempting to give an essay on the nature and structure of the personality of the politician, I do want to insist that he, like other people, can be achievement-oriented, and most probably is motivated by desire to look back on a career with some satisfaction. Furthermore, the man or woman in political life has access to insights regarding community attitudes that can be extremely valuable.

Planning with also involves other agencies and organizations. Increasingly, we are perceiving the needs of the aging as requiring a gestalt or configuration of services. No agency can possibly encompass the range of possible service. It is unfortunate, then, if each agency goes its own way in its planning for services without reference to others associated with it. If this seems to be an elaboration of the obvious, let me put it in another way. Requirements of people today demand a level of coordination and integration of services seldom, if ever, achieved. The whole complex of problems of the aging, including chronic illness, income maintenance, recreational needs, mental health problems, family relations, and difficulties of self-identity, are far beyond the scope and range of any particular agency. Only through the most thorough and continuous kind of concerted planning can effective results occur. We are struggling

today for new patterns of interagency relationships and for a workable reconciliation of the pressures for agency autonomy with the range of priorities determined by pressing community problems.

The process, however, does not end with agencies which are formally organized into a structure of community services. We're becoming more and more aware today of the significance of informal neighborhood groups as well. Often, people are reached through these groups who are not available through more formal structures. We frequently refer to "indigenous leadership." This kind of leadership doesn't always appear in a formal structure of agency boards, nor does it necessarily show up in the so-called "power structure" of the community, in the conventional use of that phrase. I'm referring here to the leadership which is effective in terms of expressing peoples' needs and of communicating back to them the possibilities of services. It is a means of bridging the gap between the best of intention, as expressed in formal organization of services, and effective use of these services by the people toward whom they are directed. This bridge of communication can and must be constructed if services are really to work for people. This kind of leadership should be brought into the planning stage. It is not enough to wait until planning is completed and services are being offered. Such leadership as we have just noted must be more than a messenger service carrying back to those who are the objects of the service the glad tidings that, at last, they can be helped.

Finally, planning must be a process involving the total organization. It cannot be exclusively at the top. It should involve a continuous, orderly flow of communication throughout the entire structure. The processes of administration should be much more than a series of daily incidents. The effects of program should be continuously assessed in relation to the direct impact on the life of persons served. This is possible only if those who are closest to the process, where the program meets the people, have the opportunity to make what they know available to the whole organization.

This is not as easy as it sounds. We may become so fixated on the case that we overlook the implications of the problem which the case represents. As Alfred Kahn has

noted, "Cases are found, but opportunities are lost." Dr. Kahn made this comment in relation to family and child welfare programs, but the implications are just as clear with reference to the needs of the aging. He attributes lost opportunities to the fact "that agencies which deal with these families in the first instance do not act--in fact they're not expected to act--as agents or representatives of any kind of integrated community system."<sup>2</sup> To this might be added the possibility that people within an organization see themselves only in relation to their own immediate tasks and obligations. They may not perceive themselves as a part of a structure or system of services with an obligation to contribute to the whole as well as to their own part.

Such assessment must be a part of the basic process of agency function. It must go on daily and in a spirit of critical evaluation. It must include an assessment of the causes of problems. What are the problems of aging? Are they embedded deeply in basic social processes? Are they of such a massive nature that they're likely to be beyond the reach of our own programs? Or are they amenable to measures which agencies can offer toward their solution? Do they reflect gaps and failures in existing programs? Do they require new alignments and new patterns, or readjustments of the old? These are some of the questions which might arise in connection with continuing assessment.

We need to project the results of our assessment upon a screen which shows a moving picture of the organization's progress--past, present, and future. We cannot entirely predict the future, but we can make some predeterminations which help us in relation to our forecasts of future goals and program responsibilities. We would be foolhardy not to take account, for example, of the increasing numbers of aging in our population or to make some effort to forecast what their income situations will be. Demographic changes in the makeup of cities cannot be ignored.

As we assess the present and do our best to predict the future, we must also

accept the obligation to anticipate choices and priorities. How do we perceive the aging? Do we see them as a group of people to be served, with both problems and prospects? Or are we focused on the pathologies which we find within this group, many of which are found with particular intensity and frequency among them? What is our mission with reference to them? To palliate the effects of aging? Or to assist the aging themselves and society in general to find a more meaningful role for our older people?

As we proceed with planning, we face the danger of serious mistakes in relation to either of two extremes. If we see only pathology, we take a distorted view of the aging and offer only a fragmentary approach to the problems, meeting each explicit need as it arises, but ignoring the rich possibilities of helping to create a better climate of social living for the older person.

On the other hand, ignoring special needs for special and protective services is an equally great mistake. We need to look at special needs in the context of the total group and their place in society. What we really are saying with reference to planning is that we avoid getting out of focus.

Planning must be related to precise knowledge. The use of research in administration is a subject which has been discussed many times and many places. We need both operational analyses and more basic inquiries into the nature and structure of our society in relation to our older people. This kind of bifocal approach to research is a necessary part of assessment. Much can be learned by a deliberate, planned utilization of daily experience, but this is not enough by itself. Total reliance upon daily experience may lead to choices based upon immediate, rather than long-range, needs. It is all too easy to attempt to solve each problem as it comes up each day and to turn to where the pressure is felt most keenly, rather than where the most ultimate good will come. I cannot stress too much the importance of this bifocal vision.

The planning body needs to be aware of the importance of balance which takes into account the total needs of a society. Parochialism should be avoided. Burgeoning special programs, each related to a particular problem or clientele, may, in

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<sup>2</sup> Alfred J. Kahn, "A Co-ordinated Pattern of Services--Shibboleth or Feasible Goal," in Basic Issues in Co-ordinating Family and Child Welfare Programs, ed. by Charles P. Cella, Jr. and Rodney P. Lane, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964, p. 9.

the long run, create an array of organizations which will present a bewildering picture to a public. Agencies in increasing numbers compete, under these circumstances, for attention and support. The results are attributable to pressure rather than the logic of priority of need. Someday we're going to reach a place, if we aren't there yet, where a bold and comprehensive kind of organizational engineering will be demanded. The fact that I've mentioned at the outset of this paper that programs are the outcome of persons who embrace causes may lead to extreme proliferation of special kinds of programs. Without, in any sense, taking away from these people, who have so actively supported these causes and made programs possible, I must say that in today's world a principle of balance must prevail. The person who is zealous about a group of people or a particular service will be impatient with the prospect of having this need allegedly submerged in the larger body of a wide-scale program. But I don't know how long we can continue to develop special organizations and services around each particular problem or need or clientele. We are going to need a level of statesmanship among our various services which we have, perhaps, never yet achieved. This is the only way of avoiding an uneasy and unproductive balance among aggressive, contending organizations.

In planning, also, we need to be alert to the dangers of panaceas. People come in with total solutions at various times. There are no single solutions to many human problems.

We are talking, I suppose, about a particular kind of leadership or perhaps, about two kinds. In Roland Warren's analysis of a re-formulation of community theory, he speaks of David Riesman's distinction between "inner directedness" and "other directedness." The inner-directed person is one who has a singleness of purpose, which means that he is going to push his program at all costs. He will swing people into line behind him. An obstacle is something to be overcome. The other-directed person is more permissive in a sense. He is willing to influence people to want something, but to defer to their rate of acceptance so that it becomes, not just a develop-

ment of a single program, but rather, something which relates to the total community interest and to the readiness of people to participate in the process. We probably need both kinds of people, but we need a balance between them.

We could go much further and much more deeply into the process of planning. We have not talked about it as a technique. This, I would presume, will be receiving your attention in the various meetings in connection with this conference. I hope that, at least, I have presented some important basic considerations which pertain to our role in planning.

These are times which call for the application of creative imagination to the process of planning. Both problems and resources are growing. When we refer to our increasingly complex problems, whether for our aging persons or any other group, when we talk about the process of planning in relation to these problems, we must not forget that as our problems have grown, so have our resources in relation to our technical skills and our support. Much of what we call the "problems" of the aging today arise out of our growing aspirations for our older persons. We should not regard it entirely in a negative light. We have set our sights higher than ever before. This, in itself, creates pressures but pressures of a most positive kind.

We also realize that some of these problems derive from our developing knowledge, which creates problems of its own as knowledge presents its demands for use. As we know more about something, we build our own pressures to do something with what we know. We have pressures to build more medical facilities today because better medical care is available and more knowledge can be tapped. We have increasing faith in our ability to master the problems of income loss and therefore we generate pressures to do something about this problem.

If I were to define in a few brief words the objectives of planning, I would say that it is the challenge to convert our technological, medical, and other advances into social benefits. It would be a supreme irony if progress through advancing knowledge should become detrimental, rather than beneficial, for people. If our skill in the use of our social inventions does not equal

the creative ability of those who make these inventions, this could happen. Our basic challenge, then, is to put our greater resources, our developing knowledge today, to work for the achievement

of our aspirations for this important group of our people, the aging. Through this process, we contribute not only to them, but to the improvement of our total society.

## Goals and Objectives in Aging

By George W. Grier, Acting Director of Research, United Planning Organization for Human Services, and Staff Associate, The Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies

We in the United States are well accustomed to change. We have learned not only to accept it and adapt to it, but to use it constructively in increasing our strength as a Nation. From the outset, change and growth have been the main-springs of our fluid social and economic system. The very possibility of change was the reason many first came to these shores; and it helped most to find at least some of the rewards they had hoped for from this land of promise.

Yet today rapid and widespread change poses to the American Nation a set of challenges new even to its varied experience. In their pace, their scope, and their variety the alterations now taking place in the United States exceed anything in its previous history. Change and growth are everywhere at hand, and proceeding with startling rapidity: in the size and structure of our population; in the physical shape of our environment; in our technology; in our economy; in the relationships among the various groups which comprise our society.

One important consequence is that we can no longer afford the luxury of waiting to deal with emerging needs and problems until they are full upon us. Given the inevitable lags in implementation of facilities and services, it is then far too late. To the best of our ability, we must look ahead and plan to deal constructively with changing conditions before they overwhelm us. We must build for the future, not the present.

Therefore, we find growing interest today in advance planning of many kinds: planning for urban growth, planning for public utilities, planning for industrial expansion, planning for highways and transportation systems, planning for schools, planning for medical facilities, and--the subject of this conference--

planning for the needs of older people.

Advance planning is most needed where growth and change are most rapid; and, as all of us here know, our older population has been growing and changing very rapidly indeed. Between 1950 and 1960, elderly people increased in numbers by a rate almost two times as fast as the population as a whole. For decades they have consistently outrun the most careful projections.

The very concept of planning implies goals. We plan toward something--toward a future situation which we hope will be better than that which exists now, and far better than the situation which would exist without the plans we make.

Goals, in turn, involve assumptions about what is "better." And this is not always easy to say. For planning involves not mere abstract statistics but people-- individual human beings of varying needs, wants, and capacities. The goals we set, and the plans we base upon these goals, must satisfy individual differences at the same time that they deal realistically with the vast and sweeping forces that press upon us from every side.

This, then, is a key dilemma of our times: how to preserve individual rights and diversity while at the same time meeting the mass needs of growing millions in a changing society.

Older people pose this dilemma in especially challenging form. They are at least as different, one from another, as people in earlier stages of life. Some recent studies, in fact, suggest that increasing age enhances already-existing personality differentials, life habits, and idiosyncracies. Superimposed upon these are the organic changes and disabilities produced by increasing age--alterations which proceed in differing ways and at varying rates for different individuals.

The problem is further complicated by two facts: first, that most older people's retired status makes them essentially reliant upon the contributions of younger people still in the working force for their economic survival; and second, that their declining health and strength often bring them increasingly into dependence upon others to maintain the basic activities of existence. As all of us know, however, most older people strongly and rightfully resent any infringement upon their rights as individuals.

More dependent, and at the same time more individualistic, and fiercely determined to remain as independent as possible as long as possible--these characteristics of many older people place a particularly heavy burden upon the shoulders of those of us who must evolve goals and develop plans for meeting their needs.

Planning inevitably imposes large responsibilities upon the planner, since in a very real sense he is deciding the fate of others. Partly for this reason, many Americans have long resisted the very idea of planning. But whatever our wishes in the matter, we no longer have a real choice. Plan we must, for without planning we can be certain that needs will not be met either for groups or for individuals. And if needs are ignored, the inevitable result will be increasing restrictions upon the human freedoms we value so highly. So we cannot very well decide not to plan. We can only do our best to insure that our plans are in the highest interests of those for whom they are made. When the objects of our plans are people past 65, the responsibilities involved are not essentially different than with other segments of the population; but in some respects they are more demanding.

How can we arrive at goals both large enough and sensitive enough to serve the mass and individual needs of older Americans? We cannot simply ask them what they want; for a prime fact of our complex times is that few individuals possess adequate information about the forces which are working either to facilitate or to frustrate their personal objectives. We must base our goals and plans upon this larger knowledge, to the extent that we possess it or can obtain it.

What factors should be taken into account in formulating goals and objectives

in aging? Three main classes can be identified for the purposes of our discussion:

First, the democratic ideals which have contributed so much to the Nation's greatness, and which we today seek both to preserve and to make equally operative for all its citizens.

Second, the rapidly changing nature of the society in which older people, like all of us, must live--changes which often necessitate modification of traditional approaches.

Third, the changing nature of the older person himself. Like the rest of us, he is both a contributor to, and a product of, the fast-moving world of the present.

Thus, sound goals and objectives in aging demand that we look both to the past and to the future: To the past, for guidance based upon the democratic precepts developed by our forefathers--at few times in our history have we needed them more; to the future, in order to build a solid foundation for continuance of America's free and open society.

This paper will be devoted chiefly to the latter category--the older American of the future and the society in which he will live. Of course, we are possessed of no magic crystal through which to envision this future; all we can do is project presently observable trends and estimate their probable impact in a given number of years to come.

First, let us look at ongoing and prospective changes in American society as they affect the situation of the future aging citizen. One of the dominant themes in the picture of national change is population growth and movement.

We are a fast-growing Nation now, and will probably continue to grow for some decades. The Nation's total population is expected to rise to about 300 million by the year 2000, according to projections now regarded as most likely. Even if the present rate of growth should be cut in half, we Americans would still be about 250 million strong at the turn of the next century.

We are a fast-moving Nation now, and probably will continue to be highly mobile in the future. About half of all American households changed their place of residence during the last half of the 1950's. Our people have been moving in many directions simultaneously: from central

cities to suburbs, from farms to cities, from the interior of the Nation toward its periphery, from east to west, and from south to west and north. All these concurrent movements add up to vast changes in the physical and social framework of this country.

For one thing, we are no longer primarily a rural nation. While America's total population has been increasing, its farm population has been declining. Again, there is every probability that this trend will continue at least for a decade or two to come.

For another, we are building super-cities. By 1960, about two-thirds of all Americans already lived in 212 metropolitan areas. By 2000, projections place the proportion which will be residing in metropolitan concentrations between 75 and 85 percent. The Urban Land Institute has estimated that that not-too-distant year will see 10 super-metropolitan areas, the smallest roughly the present size of metropolitan Chicago.

The Washington Metropolitan Area in which we meet today well exemplifies this confluence of overall growth and cityward migration. In 1940 it contained less than 1 million people. By 1960 it had over 2 million. In other words, within only 20 years--less than it takes a child to grow to voting age--this metropolitan area had to develop additional housing, facilities, and services for more citizens than had been added in all the previous years of its history. During the remaining decades of this century, its population is expected to more than double once more, reaching 5 million.

Two-thirds of the nation's total population growth during the 1950's occurred in the suburbs of its 212 metropolitan areas. Much of the suburban expansion took the form of sprawling single-home developments. Most of these suburbs were built with an eye to the needs of only one population group: young and growing families with small children, whose interests and activities are centered largely in the home. Many require use of a car to obtain access to life's necessities.

We will not continue to build our super-cities in this fashion. For one thing, we cannot long afford such lavish consumption of land. Metropolitan Washington used up choice acreage during the 1950's at about twice its rate of increase in population.

Already much planning activity is afoot to channel and concentrate the future course of urban growth. Nor should we continue in this way if we could, because some important groups in the population have been very badly served by the recent spread-out pattern of development. One of these groups is the elderly--many of whom need more convenient access to community facilities than it provides and for whom the spaciousness of the suburbs often constitutes a burden. It is no accident that the postwar expansion has left most older people behind in the central cities.

Clearly our goals and objectives in aging must incorporate the need to satisfy the particular environmental requirements of our older citizens in the metropolitan centers which are increasingly the chief habitat of Americans. Clearly, too, those whose concern it is to develop and apply these goals should be in close communication with those responsible for planning the future course of metropolitan development.

Concurrent with population growth, migration, and metropolitan concentration have gone important shifts in the age structure of the Nation. As everyone in this audience is aware, older people have increased not merely in numbers but in their percentage of the U.S. total. Along with the proportional increase at the older extreme of the age spectrum, moreover, has come another at the younger end. The middle-age categories have not been growing as rapidly. The consequence is that the burdens placed by the "dependent" age segments upon the population of working age are increasing. Since older people constitute only one of these segments, they must compete for attention with children and youth. Our goals in aging must assure older people their rightful place in the priority structure, but they must also recognize the welfare of other age groups and of the population as a whole.

Two other dominant themes in today's changing America are economic and technological. All of us, old and young included, reside in a highly industrialized economy possessing unprecedented wealth and technical power. It can truly be said that there are few remaining restraints upon the ability of the United States to accomplish any aims its citizens can conceive and generally agree to be worthwhile.

Such restraints as do exist lie chiefly in our inability to recognize our capabilities and to exercise them with imagination and vision. We must use our full potential, however, if we are to meet the challenges of the future in the interests of all our citizens.

How great is our power to meet emerging needs and devise new approaches? Perhaps the best way to comprehend it is by reviewing some of our accomplishments since the conclusion, less than 20 years ago, of the most destructive and expensive war in human history.

We are now raising and educating to higher levels than ever before a child population half again as large as that of 1940.

We have recently been building and equipping new homes at a rate averaging well over 1 million a year--twice the rate of increase in families. One consequence is that Americans are far better housed than ever before, with dramatic reductions in slums, blight, and overcrowding. Another result, to which the reduction of the farm population has also contributed, has been a great decline in the incidence of the three-generation family with its implications for the living patterns and needs of older people.

Nor did a mobile Nation neglect the means of its mobility. During the 1950's alone, America added over 213,000 miles to its Federal highway system--very nearly the distance to the moon, which we have recently been trying so hard to reach by less adequately developed, but even more expensive, means of transport. In most of these same years, Americans built and bought over 5 million new automobiles annually.

During the postwar era, the Nation also undertook to develop from the ground up a vast new system for mass communication via television. By 1961, only about 15 years after we had started, there were over 500 television transmitting stations in operation, and almost 90 percent of American households had been equipped with receivers.

All these advances, and many more, have been accomplished at no net cost to the average American worker, in the sense that his standard of living has been considerably augmented and his average hours of work have been somewhat decreased during their course. In fact, there is every

reason to believe that our huge expenditures have enriched, instead of drained, the American economy and the personal resources of its people.

Projecting these recent accomplishments into the future involves considerable difficulty. One important reason has been made familiar to us by many recent publications. Whether we can continue our economic advance depends in major part upon whether we can find ways of keeping our immensely efficient production machine from choking upon its own abundance.

One thing is clear: the nation is capable of meeting its present and future material needs with less and less demand upon its manpower resources. Machines increasingly perform tasks which only men previously could perform. Our capital plant, in other words, is becoming capable of doing its job with less and less human aid or intervention. We operate now not in an economy of scarcity but one of surplus--an economy in which many of our traditional concepts and modes of behavior may no longer be fully valid. For example, we may find ourselves in the future less and less concerned with the costs of things, and more and more concerned with their contribution to the workings of our economy and society. No other nation has ever been so fortunate. We should take full advantage of the opportunities this change presents. Indeed, we must do so, for the cost of clinging to outmoded ways could well be the loss of all we have built.

Here again, it is important that our goals in aging envision the most constructive role possible for the older American in a changing economic and technological environment. In this connection, the present view of older people as economically dependent may merit searching reevaluation. Perhaps we should view them instead in terms of how they can contribute positively to the Nation's abundant economy through their ability to consume its products and services. Such a view, in turn, might lead us to reexamine the goals and procedures of our present income-maintenance programs.

To sum up: the America of the present and foreseeable future is one in which old ways and problems are fast disappearing, and new ones are taking their place. A once-rural Nation has become urban, and will be increasingly so in the future.

We must adjust the form of our environment to the needs of human beings in an increasingly concentrated metropolitan setting. At the same time, our technological progress has created abundance where once there was scarcity, coincidentally raising the problem of how to use and distribute this prosperity in the interest of its own continuation. Those of us concerned with goals in aging must envision a positive role for the Nation's elderly citizens in this crucial process of change and adaptation.

While America as a whole has been growing and changing, so have the older people who currently make up nearly one-tenth of the nation. The numerical increase in the over-65 population recently has averaged in excess of 400,000 annually, or more than the population of Vermont.

To imagine establishing a new state of this size each year, and equipping it with needed services and facilities, helps us to comprehend the magnitude of the task--especially when we remember that all the citizens of this new state would be past their 65th birthdays, with the declining physical and financial resources characteristic of this stage of life. But the comparison grossly oversimplifies the nature of the tasks of planning and implementation represented by America's growing elderly population. For the people involved are not geographically separate from other citizens, but are distributed widely throughout 50 States and thousands of municipalities--in most cases those in which they spent much or all of their adulthood.

A key problem in establishing realistic goals in aging lies in this very fact: while older people's needs often differ substantially from those of their younger counterparts, these needs must be met principally within the community where the individual has lived most of his life. Local variations must be recognized.

One of the chief reasons for the increase in their numbers is that older people are living longer, but here there are problems as well as benefits. The lengthening of lifespans has meant that people at the uppermost end of the age spectrum (age 85 or over) are increasing at about twice the rate of the over-65 population as a whole. By 1975, the total aged population is expected to increase by about one-third over the 1960 total, but the

85-plus group will grow by almost 80 percent.

It is in these upper age ranges that problems of chronic disability, senile deterioration, and prolonged need for care are currently most prevalent. For example, the use of proprietary nursing homes by people 85 and older is more than 17 times as frequent as by those 65 through 74, in proportion to their numbers in the general population. In establishing goals for aging we must anticipate the need for such services and facilities to increase at least in the near future at a substantially faster rate than the older population as a whole.

Overall, the current and prospective health situation of older people presents us with a large dilemma. While no one can tell what the future may bring in this regard, many of our recent advances in the treatment of chronic illness have been more along the line of control than of cure. This has been true, for example, of such widely varying illnesses as diabetes, arthritis, and circulatory diseases. We are increasingly possessed of the means to keep the victims of such illnesses alive and even fairly well to advanced ages, but this often is accomplished at heavy and continuing costs in drugs, therapy, and expert medical supervision. Other illnesses which become increasingly prevalent with age, such as cancer, can be cured or controlled--if at all--only through surgery and other radical treatments which involve great cost.

Illness strikes indiscriminately and unpredictably without considering the ability of its victims to pay the resulting medical bills. Surely our goals in aging must recognize the right of every older American to adequate medical care regardless of his financial situation--and to freedom from concern about whether he will impose unbearable economic burdens upon his widow or his children.

The increase in longevity has accrued more to the benefit of women than to men: and herein lie facts which must also be given substantial weight in our goals. Today, for every five men past 65 there is one extra woman. The disproportion is growing rapidly, and by the mid-1970's there may be one extra elderly woman for every three men. This is a relatively new phenomenon in our society; as recently as 1930 there was a slight excess

of elderly males. While women live longer, they tend to have more chronic illness than men of equal age, and in many ways they require more protection and services.

Not only do women live longer on the average; they also marry younger and remarry less frequently after the death or divorce of their spouse. Thus it is that among all women 65 and over, about two out of three lack husbands.

The prospect that a woman now married will eventually face widowhood is very great indeed. In fact, widowhood must be considered as a "normal" attribute of old age in today's America. Surely it is one of the most important aspects as well. Grief, loneliness, the need to adjust living patterns to drastically changed conditions, the absence of a man to provide protection and to perform the heavier tasks of household maintenance--all these are the customary lot of once-married women who survive to an advanced age. They are becoming more prevalent. By 1975 we can anticipate about 8 million widows past 65--about the size of the entire elderly population before World War II.

Thus, although we may anticipate that the older citizens of the future will live longer and be healthier and more active in many respects, we may expect that in some ways they will also be more dependent on the rest of our society--more in need of certain facilities, services, environmental amenities, and protections. We will have to incorporate provision of these benefits into our goals for aging if we are to enable our elderly citizens to achieve their own personal objectives of remaining as independent as possible as long as possible in the period of their lives when independence becomes progressively harder to retain.

Having contributed so much to the national material progress, the older person of today and of the next several decades will naturally want to continue benefiting from it until his death. He is not likely to be willing to give up his present living standard and accept relegation to an inferior one merely because his contribution is no longer valued in the labor market.

Retirement, however, has increasingly become the prevalent mode of life for older people. Only about a third of men aged 65 or older were in the labor force in 1960, compared to nearly two-thirds

at the beginning of this century. Coupled with a more than fivefold growth in the over-65 population, this has meant a tenfold increase in elderly retirees. Male retirees now number roughly 5 million. By the mid-1970's they may increase to 8 million or more.

Statistics on the additional amounts of leisure time created by retirement are startling. A man retiring at age 65, provided he previously worked a 40-hour week and lives for the median expectancy of over 12 years, will have about 25,000 hours of "extra time" during his remaining life. If he previously commuted to work, each daily hour of commuting time will add over 3,000 "extra" hours after retirement.

The vast increase in free time has created some of the most significant yet subtle problems which older people face. Since these problems chiefly affect the individual or couple within the privacy of their own home, they have aroused less public attention than some others. They are no less real.

Collectively, when multiplied by the number of retirees, the extra hours mount into the billions. They present a challenge which this society cannot well avoid. This time must be used somehow. How can it be employed most constructively in the interests of older people and of America as a Nation?

One thing seems clear: the prospects are dim for any large-scale return of retired workers to the paid, full-time labor force. The rate of growth of retirement has accelerated since World War II. While the reasons are complex, a trend of impressive dimensions is obviously in progress. Can it be reversed? Probably not. Should it be reversed? Here we must be concerned, as in other instances, not merely with the older person himself but with the total society in which he lives. That society is having increasing difficulty in employing its labor force, regardless of age. It is having increasing difficulty in consuming and distributing its material production. Is the proper role of the typical older person that of producer or of consumer?

How well does the older person function as a consumer? Not very well, at present. He has too little income, on the average, to contribute much in that direction. How well could he consume, given an adequate

income? We are not certain, but the behavior of the relatively small proportion of our older people who are comfortably fixed today may be a valuable guide. They do not appear to be hoarding their money. Indeed, a close look at a new Bureau of Labor Statistics survey of consumption patterns suggests that, where their incomes are above the poverty level, the per capita spending of households with heads aged 65 through 74 approximates and sometimes exceeds that of younger households in such economically important categories as restaurant meals, recreation, reading, personal care, and travel other than by automobile.

But, of course, many older people are well below the poverty line today. That this is so would appear, on the face of it, to be less an inadequacy of personal accomplishments than of national policy. Since most older people are retired, their incomes depend on two things: first, the amounts they have been able to save during their earning years; and second, the provisions American society has made for income maintenance in retirement. Since they spent most of their working lives during a period when America's prosperity had not achieved its present height, few have saved much. Whatever else they have to live on in this era of abundance created by their labors is up to us all, the American public.

How well have we done by them? The median benefit paid under social security to widows today is about \$60 per month. The median benefit for couples is about twice that amount. Both sums are well below the poverty level, even by the most conservative standards used in defining that level. The original objective of Social Security, as I understand it, was to provide a basic "floor" of income security upon which the individual could build through his own efforts. What good is a floor that is under water? Should not goals recognize the right of every older person to a living income?

While this is a paper about goals and objectives in aging, I will not attempt to define these goals. That difficult task is up to the members of this audience. However, I have tried to point out some of the factors, in the older person and in the society, which may bear on their proper determination. Before concluding, I would like to offer 10 principles which I think

might well be brought to bear whenever we are considering broad goals, specific objectives, and concrete plans for the future of America's older citizens.

### 1. Preserve Dignity, Independence, and Security

Declining health and strength, retirement from paid employment, and loss of loved ones are basic facts of life for those who are aging. They cannot be eliminated by means available to us at present, but there is no valid reason to make them any more oppressive than absolutely necessary. Policies and practices which serve to remind older persons of their dependence on others, which require them to beg for help or to "prove" their need for special forms of assistance, should be avoided. Policies and practices which help to increase feelings of security in an essentially insecure period of life should be promoted. Measures which aid the older person to maintain independent functioning despite the inevitable losses of lengthening years should be given every encouragement. Dependency as a result of natural causes should not be exacerbated by economic want or insecurity when the Nation has ample resources to prevent financial deprivation.

### 2. Provide Freedom of Choice

Measures taken for the benefit of older persons should provide the widest possible latitude for expression of individual differences. Certainly nothing that is done on their behalf should restrict freedom of choice beyond its present limits; more than this, however, it is desirable to encourage the broadest variety of facilities and services.

This principle applies particularly to governmental programs, where standardization may often be sought both as a goal in itself and as a means of assuring economy or high levels of performance. There is no single "best" solution to the needs of all older people, and only a wide variety of approaches can possibly satisfy individual preferences.

By and large, the varying needs of older persons are most likely to be satisfied if they possess the means to purchase

facilities, goods, and services freely in the competitive private market, rather than being forced to rely upon subsidized programs where restriction of available alternatives is often required by considerations of economy.

### 3. Promote Full Participation

Decreasing physical reserves or deteriorating health eventually force many older people to withdraw from full participation in the society. Others, by virtue of basic personality traits, may welcome the freedom to draw into themselves. These individual needs and wants must be respected; nothing should be done to force older persons to participate when they do not wish to do so.

On the other hand, nothing should discourage them from continuing to take an active part in the workings of a society of which they have been members from birth. Anything which tends to shut older people off from the rest of society, or to make it difficult for them to maintain continuing ties with community, friends, and family, should be avoided.

This principle does not preclude the provision of specialized facilities for older persons, such as housing projects or activity centers. There is a large and growing body of evidence that many older people are more comfortable and remain more active when they have around them a substantial number of their contemporaries, with whom they share bonds of common experience and interests.

On the other hand, isolated location of homes or housing developments for older people should be discouraged. Public transit, which makes community facilities accessible to people regardless of condition of health or ability to drive, is an essential utility for older people.

### 4. Minimize the Negative Impact of Aging

Aging is essentially a negative, "down-hill" process, which progressively takes from the individual many of the things which he possessed at the peak of his maturity--strength, health, economic security, even loved ones. Nothing which man has yet discovered promises to reverse or even to halt this process

completely, although many ways are already known to lessen its impact upon particular phases of the individual's morale and ability to function.

Goals in aging should be directed toward maximum support and encouragement of efforts to reduce deterioration; to alleviate pain and distress; to maintain the individual's ability to function under changed conditions; and, where possible, to provide acceptable substitutes for at least some of the things which are lost in the aging process.

### 5. Encourage Private Action

Much of this Nation's strength derives from the eagerness of its citizens to act on their own volition to advance and secure their personal welfare. Much of its vigor also derives from the tendency of Americans to join together in voluntary associations for business, civic action, or recreation. Americans as a nation are a somewhat paradoxical but highly successful combination of individualists and joiners.

Goals in aging should encourage the private efforts of individuals and voluntary groups to solve the problems of a growing elderly population. The freedom of action constitutionally permitted private citizens offers the latitude to pioneer, to demonstrate new approaches, to protest inequities, and to advocate changes in law and in public and private practices.

### 6. Recognize Government's Responsibilities

Despite the value of private effort, there are areas of responsibility which properly accrue to all citizens through their duly constituted organs of government, and for which private agents neither can be held responsible nor can meet the needs. In such cases the need for governmental intervention must be recognized, and the appropriate mechanisms must be established and adequately supported with public funds.

Governmental action is called for in any case where a segment of the population is placed in need by circumstances beyond individual control, and where the need is too widespread or demanding of resources

to be filled through private channels, charitable or otherwise. Such is the case with the economic position of older people today.

Governmental action is also required to regulate private actions which are either essential or potentially dangerous to life, health, or welfare. In the field of aging, vigorous regulatory action is required to assure the safety and effectiveness of drugs and other aids to the health of older people. Government must also protect the rights and property of elderly persons against sharp and fraudulent practices which take unfair advantage of their declining strength and health, their feelings of insecurity about finances and medical problems, and the states of mental confusion which sometimes afflict very old people.

Government must regulate and set standards of performance for services and facilities intended to aid that portion of the elderly population which clearly is unable to act any longer in its own protection--i.e., hospitals and total-care institutions. Where the provision of new facilities lags behind the need, it is the responsibility of Government to stimulate action.

Finally, government has the responsibility to educate the public as to matters affecting its welfare, and to promulgate the most reliable and up-to-date knowledge on methods for dealing with the needs.

The fact that an influential segment of the public is adequately served through private sources should never be permitted to deflect government from its responsibilities to the remainder who are unserved. For example, the spread of private pension plans does not mean that government can avoid its responsibility to the many who are not presently, and the many more who will never be, covered by such plans. In general, such private measures tend to advantage those who would be in the most favorable position without them. It is the responsibility of government to protect the interests of those of its citizens who are least able to protect themselves.

#### 7. Serve All Older People Equally

The right of all citizens to equal opportunity and to equal treatment under law are

basic tenets of American democracy. Under the Constitution, all governmentally aided programs for older people must be available without discrimination by race, color, creed, or national origin. This constitutional requirement extends to state and local governments. Equality of access in programs under private sponsorship is a moral imperative, whether or not law requires it.

A further aspect of equal opportunity is that, wherever possible, public programs should provide equal benefits to all older citizens regardless of economic status or possession of property. Recently, some State laws have given special tax advantages to older homeowners which are not available to those who rent their dwellings. The result is to furnish a special advantage to a segment of the older population which is already somewhat more prosperous than the remainder, and already enjoys lower housing costs as well.

Where the principle of equal benefits to all cannot be observed for humanitarian or other valid reasons, as in the provision of Old Age Assistance, the benefits of governmental action should go to those who are least advantaged. Every effort should be devoted, however, to making even this type of selective treatment unnecessary.

#### 8. Consider the Welfare of All Citizens Over Any Special Group

Whatever measures are taken for the benefit of older people should also be to the advantage of the Nation as a whole. Obviously, nothing done on behalf of any special group should weaken the total economy or political structure of the nation. But beyond this, it is necessary to consider in positive terms what courses of action will best serve not merely the special welfare of older people but that of all citizens.

In a time of rapid change and of peril to America, it is essential that older people--like all the rest of us--contribute all they possibly can to the greater strength and security of the United States. Their ability to do so will obviously be impaired if they are merely dependents subsisting on the grudging charity of the society, or if they are a disadvantaged and disgruntled minority.

## 9. Keep in Step with Changing Needs

As I have tried to indicate earlier, both the United States and its older people are changing with unprecedented rapidity. To the degree that it is possible, it is necessary to anticipate these changes and to alter or develop programs to deal with them. New programs should not wait upon the development of a full-fledged problem, but should anticipate needs wherever possible because of the often unavoidably long lag between concept and implementation in a democratic society.

For the same reasons, it is important to build into the structure of new and existing programs sufficient flexibility to provide for changing needs not now subject to anticipation. Ideally, specific mechanisms should be provided to accomplish these changes without the requirement of legislative action.

An example will be found in the benefit levels of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance, which presently are adjusted only at irregular intervals and usually lag cost-of-living changes to a degree that substantially reduces the effective benefits. It would be in the interest of older people specifically, and of the citizens of the United States as a whole, to eliminate this source of needless hardship through automatic changes in accord with price levels. A considerable background of experience with such techniques is available in the income maintenance programs of European nations.

## 10. Obtain, Disseminate and Apply New Knowledge

Our knowledge about aging and its meaning for the individual and for the society in which he lives has grown very rapidly in recent years. Still, many important answers remain unknown, or at best imperfectly understood.

It is in the best interest of the Nation and its older people that we encourage the acquisition of more and better knowl-

edge. Research, both fundamental and applied, should be stimulated and supported both by government and by private philanthropy.

It is important also that the knowledge gained from research be granted the widest possible dissemination. All too often, important research findings are known only to a limited circle of scientific personnel, and are rarely brought to the attention of the practitioners and interested laymen who would be instrumental in giving them concrete application. If the problems of aging are to be solved, the solutions cannot be achieved in the laboratory alone. They will only come to fruition when knowledge provided by research finds its way into community action.

Finally, let me say just a word about priorities and strategies. It is essential that our goals and objectives in aging be developed in accord with a framework of priorities. Not every goal will be equally important or urgent. We must choose our priorities carefully and realistically. If we do so, we may very well find that some of our lesser goals are accomplished in the process of achieving the larger ones. I myself would tend to give a living income for every older person a very high priority in the structure.

Second, we must consider strategies toward achieving our goals, and here is a field in which you are far more expert than I. We must consider the possible as well as the ideal. But I would insert one word of caution along this line. If we compromise too early or too easily, we may find ourselves needlessly sacrificing the ideal to the possible. We may find, in that case, that we have won a Pyrrhic victory, and that what we have bought with our efforts is a very bad bargain indeed. As I said at the outset of this talk, those who plan for the needs of others assume a degree of authority over their fates. This authority carries with it a responsibility none of us can take lightly.

## Disengagement Theory and the Elderly

By William E. Henry, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and Human Development,  
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One of the principal tasks of the years up to adolescence is to learn the control of one's physical and motor skills, and to perceive the possibilities of self-imitated, self-directed independent acts. The activities of the principal adult working years are stabilizing ones, involving the sustaining of a family and the modulation of self-desire into societally relevant forms. These are the constructive norm-bearing years. The ties that bind are developed during the middle adult years--developed and interlaced into every fragment of our lives--into every personal, familial, occupational sector of our being.

The forces of the society, and increasingly, our own will, direct us into forms of firm engagement with the issues, the goals, the ways of thinking of our relevant social groups, and to a lesser extent, into the belief and social patterns of the society at large. This intertwining of our lives with the lives of others constitutes part of the framework that sustains the society--a matrix of shared feelings and habits that, often without conscious intent, propels us in common ways.

But with increased age the heavy demand of family and occupationally determined goals lessens. Regardless of individual choice, the demands and the opportunities for central involvement in work and family--the society's two focal demands--become less binding. "Retirement" and "the empty nest" are two concepts reflecting this state of affairs. This is not to say, obviously enough perhaps, that no occasion or demand exists for the older person to engage himself with work or family. It merely says that such activities become less salient, less prominent within the daily life. Not only are they less prominent in the time they occupy, but they are similarly less relevant to the psychological planning for the future. The reduction in bind thus occasioned lessens the need for instrumentality, and the need to

focalize one's thoughts in hopes and plans with future accomplishment as an aim. The removal of these engaging, demanding, and yet rewarding goals, places the individual older person, along with his agemates, in a social and personal situation in which new goals can be adopted, in which former but less focalized and salient interests can emerge. In terms of the older person's relation to himself, and to his society, two energizing and complex roles no longer demand attention. In the first, the years up to adolescence, his attention has been focused upon the personal, upon the physical, and by the need for autonomous action. In the second, the middle years, his attention has been focused upon the social--the tasks of supporting others and of interpreting self with the social system. Specific activities, plans, relationships have, during this earlier developmental phase, been directed by those two central personal and social tasks. The central task of the older ages is, however, different--and the specific activities and relationships become directed by an altered overall sense of program.

The concept of disengagement, as phrased by Dr. Elaine Cumming and me in our book, *Growing Old*, was intended to suggest and in part to delineate our view of this central task, the main sense of program, for the later years. The concept attempts to account for a fairly large array of data on older persons, and to suggest the principle that serves to direct the older person's choices of action, and feelings, and relationships. The concept is at about the same order of abstraction as my comments on the central tasks of earlier periods--the focus upon body mastery and self-autonomy for the period up to adolescence, and the focus upon stabilized social engagement during the middle adult years.

We would see "disengagement" as a fitting summary concept for these years in the sense that it suggests a disentangling of

commitments and binding agreements, in the sense that it suggests a reduction in the demand of society for such commitments. It is for this reason that we have proposed that this process is a two-way one--the society cuts down on its assumption of maximal involvement in the tasks of society, as the individual himself comes to feel less bound and committed. It is apparent that for some persons this is a distressful period, and for others a period of great relief and personal enjoyment. Morale is thus variable during this period, though our own material as reported by Neugarten and Havighurst, and the studies of Gordon Streib, more than amply testify to the notion that once one has reorganized one's goals and self-image, considerable personal satisfaction can be found in this period. We do not think that this is a satisfaction that comes principally from being instrumentally effective, nor from the rewards of nurturant relations with family--though these do occur, of course. We think, rather, that the satisfaction comes from having had in the past satisfying experiences in these areas, from adopting an altered present life-style.

The degree to which the past is the guide to the future is considerable, and it serves as the base for most predictions. Thus Suzanne Reichard has commented that the best guide to how a man will react to retirement is to be found in how he has reacted to crises in the past. The same certainly applies to broader generalizations about adjustment to the later years, and it probably applies to the manner and degree of disengagement. The implication of this statement is that there are undoubtedly wide variations in the degree to which individuals do disengage, and in the ways in which they do so. Some disengaging older persons are representative of our modal form--in which social interaction is reduced, in which attention and affect is withdrawn from formerly involving persons and events, and in which more attention is given to one's inner thoughts. Someone has commented that television viewing is the great disengager. There is real merit in the suggestion. It provides a semblance of instrumental activity--how can one be accused of not doing anything when he is watching a TV show of action and drama? It provides a rationale for lowered affect

and social contact. One can even watch the screen in the presence of many others, without the need to pay attention to them. And at the same time it provides great stimulation for inner thought, whether reacting to the fantasy of the screen, or allowing the darkened room to obscure your self-directed fantasy.

But certainly this is not the only formula for disengagement. Common among some professional groups is possibly an accentuation of the already developed inner preoccupation--one that permits active social interaction to reduce almost unnoticed, and reduced affective ties to be obscured by one's involvement in a technically intellectual task. The woman in the old persons' home studied by Morton Lieberman and David Miller who comments that the still continuing pains and ills of her relatives "just don't bother me any more" is also disengaging--in that her former attachments to the problems of others are losing their vigor.

Another related facet of disengagement originally suggested by Growing Old is the resurgence of affect that is principally self-expression, or if you will, self-indulging. The dressmaker Dr. Cumming has mentioned whose joy in her bicycle is matched only by her gleeful admiration of Dr. Cumming's red convertible sports car does not stand alone. Many others, slowly disentangling themselves from obligations, have found self-pleasuring activities rising. Even Professor Everett Hughes, a mature gentleman if not of such an age where disengagement is central, notices that as he gave up smoking, he found himself using the money saved to buy a better quality of brandy.

While disengagement may be a central task of the later years, those after 65, in many it begins early. It is even possible that some of the increased focus and confidence of middle aged professionals come from the tendency, at those ages, to cut off some emotionally binding ties, and to do what one wants rather than what one thought one should. For the still occupationally active person, this order of detachment is often very liberating. It is of the same stuff, I think, as the dropping of affective binds in later years. Though during those later years, when one is commonly much less active occupationally, that property serves

a different role in the economy of the individual, coming less to serve the ends of focusing work instrumentality.

The concept of disengagement would call attention to the idea that the older years are developmentally different from the middle years. The continuity with earlier years is obviously marked. But we think that the goals, the aims, and the things perceived as rewarding are different. The basic elements remain, but their relationships change, and the value placed upon interdigitation with the social system lessens.

As we see it, disengagement involves a change in the relation to the social system--essentially a reduction in interaction and a reduction in interest in interaction. It involves a change in the personality--essentially a lessened energy for affective involvement and a greater interest in one's own inner thoughts. These changes are gradual and, as I have said, permit of considerable personal variation in style and timing. They are gradual and occur in small ways in varying sectors of one's life. It is in this sense that Dr. Cumming has said that disengaging is a little like unraveling a knitted sweater. I should hate to be quoted as saying that middle age is like a knitted sweater. But this in a sense is what it is--it is composed over time, out of various strands of experience, which come to take specific shapes and forms, and its totality has structure and organization. Disengaging, accepting this analogy, is indeed a kind of unraveling of these structures, a loosening of the apparent outer organization.

But this analogy probably loses its utility about at that point. For one reason, we suspect that there always remains a core of the previous organization. This core is probably composed of various personality orientations and a network of values. We have earlier suggested that the changes characteristic of disengagement appear in personality spheres before they do in social interaction, and we have now further evidence that this is the case. The way in which values remain vigorous is more of a problem. We have proposed that as social interaction reduces, the expected controls upon behavior resident in mingling with others would reduce. This removal of controls would suggest the possibility of increased idiosyncratic, eccentric if you will, behavior. We have all seen instances

of this and heard anecdotes, sometimes lovingly told if the eccentricity is amusing, and sometimes admitted only with reluctance, if its form is embarrassing to the middle aged. People have been asked if it would be all right for a woman to go downtown in summer wearing her playsuit bra and shorts. The middle-aged woman says, "absolutely not;" but the older woman says, "perhaps so, if it were hot." This is certainly a loosening of values, or perhaps merely an increased tolerance as to the situation to which values might apply. As acted out, it would be thought eccentric and conceivably embarrassing. We do have good evidence in our data of increasing eccentricity in this sense. But it increases more clearly with age than with reduction in social interaction. This does not mean that reduction in social interaction is irrelevant, but it does seem to mean that personality change is very crucial. It may reflect the generally found lessening of ego energy, in which convenience comes to have greater saliency than propriety. But I would suspect that if you were to ask both the older woman and middle-aged ones about values, they would not differ greatly--and certainly for some older people, in spite of value-related eccentric behavior, a rigidity of values occurs rather than a tolerance.

But do the facts and the hypothesis of disengagement theory suggest that older people should or should not be actively encouraged to be more active, in a kind of fighting delay of disengagement? Should they replace relationships as they are reduced through various losses--death, children moving, retirement?

From the point of view of the theory and of the professional working with older people, this is a crucial question. Other bodies of research and experience will have more to say about this than we would. What is clear, however: the disengagement theory itself does not have any specific proposal to make on that question. There is nothing in the theory that suggests that older people would or would not benefit from such active encouragement. The theory is one of normal aging, not one of therapeutic or activation techniques.

But I should not be allowed to get off that barbed hook so easily. I do think that in our data, from the various Kansas City Studies, there are some suggestions. For

one thing, I think it apparent that for many of our subjects, those who remain fairly active tend to have high morale--not all, but many. But, of course, that is not evidence that externally producing activity will equally produce high morale. And we have many subjects of very high morale and very low social interaction of all sorts. We are inclined to see these differences as accounted for by the particular nature of their individual social experience and by personality variation. What it says about planned activities, however, is probably that some people would benefit and some would find it very distasteful. The difference would reside in the people, not in the activation techniques. But there may be some point related to the manifest aims of a particular external activity. Not in our data, but in experiences of others, we have felt that some success was clearly achieved when the model for the planned activity took into account the altered personal and social situation of the older person, and the failure clear when it did not. When, for example, activities were based on an assumption that the values of work-instrumentality or social interaction were identical with those of middle-aged persons, little progress results. But when planned activities were geared to the fact that many older persons do not see instrumentality as having a future but only an immediate gain, and when social activ-

ities are discretionary and do not emulate the model of mutual bind and responsibility of the earlier years, some greater interest appears.

Dr. Cumming and I have been accused of claiming that many of us--you and us--are trying to recreate the older person in our own image. This is perhaps a just accusation. All I could say in extenuation is that it is a common handicap--for persons working with all age groups, not just the old. As middle-class, middle-aged persons, we are indeed highly invested in our own system, and its virtues overwhelm us.

Disengagement theory is a theory of normal aging. Regardless of its fate with future research, I would hope that it would have had at least one beneficial outcome. That would reside in its calling attention, as other persons and other theories have also, to the fact that there is a developmental period after late middle age and that it has its own properties, related to but not identical with earlier periods. It will have been a worthwhile venture if it will focus in our minds the need for more information on the nature of the personal and social problems of the elderly, the coping and adaptational possibilities of those ages as opposed to others, and if it can make some small contribution to the understanding of the unique properties and the inherent dignity of that age period.

## How To Use State Boards and Commissions Effectively

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The implied premise of the title of this paper--how to use state boards and commissions effectively--is not entirely to my liking. In the context of this conference, it suggests that one group is at the disposal of another for use in gaining some desired ends. I have, therefore, taken the liberty of redefining the subject to read "How State Commissions and Boards on Aging Can Make Themselves Effective Groups for Carrying out Their Responsibilities and for Achieving Their Goals." In addition, and in terms of an old cliché, I shall give some attention to the "care and feeding" of the executives of these groups. When I announced this latter intention to one state executive he said, "Just order me a scotch and soda and a good steak after a hard day with the committee." I suspect that there have been some boards at one time or another that would have requested the same menu after a hard day with their executives. My point is that maximum productivity and efficiency of any state unit on aging depends upon the skilled performance of both committee members and the executive.

Before discussing the means of improving the skills of appointed members and staff of state units on aging, I shall make some general observations and offer some definitions in the interest of making the discussion of a complex situation easier.

State units on aging have taken a variety of forms, dictated by special needs and circumstances within the particular state served. It is not my intention to discuss whether one or another form is preferable, but, in order to simplify discussion, I have chosen one of the more common forms as a prototype. This is the unit which has a board, be it named committee, council, or commission (and I shall use all these terms interchangeably), established either by statute or appointment, and employing

an executive and other staff to carry out its work. I shall use Houle's (7) definition of a controlling board which is "an organized group of people with legal responsibility for collectively controlling and assisting an agency which is administered by a qualified executive and staff responsible to the board." Although this model does not fit all states, I hope that at least some of my remarks will be applicable to all forms of state units.

The board system is a popular form of administrative arrangement in governmental units and in the management of many business firms. Its value is assumed to lie in the belief that a new vision, which is more comprehensive than that of any single individual, can be created through conjoint procedures (McKenzie). In spite of the popularity of the board or committee system, a point still in controversy is whether or not the board system of administration, which permits discharge of responsibility conjointly in a composite or corporate capacity, is truly an expression of democracy in action. Most of us, like Houle (7), probably accept the belief that "boards ... provide one of the most significant means for preserving the democratic spirit." Or, like Trecker (12), we consider the conference table where things are talked over to be "the underlying source of creative power" and "a dynamic device for democratic decision." On the other hand, Hagestadt (6) and Urwick (14), equally authoritative sources, independently maintain that although the board system is linked in the public mind with the apparatus of democracy and is, therefore, universally regarded as a good thing, in actuality there is no connection between committees and democracy or between individual leadership and autonomy. Either committees or individuals may be tyrannical or either may be extremely democratic in action.

While one may take Hagestadt's and Urwick's point of view, it appears that for our purposes here it is less useful, except as a warning, than is the more common assumption that the collective wisdom of a board representing various segments of knowledge and of the population is a feasible mechanism for the expression of democratic action in a populace grown too numerous to permit every citizen a direct voice in every decision affecting his life.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF BOARDS OR COMMISSIONS

The characteristics of a state committee on aging are, in general, similar to those of any committee appointed by a higher authority to serve public interests. For example, the commission on aging must (a) exercise responsibility for determining policies and seeing that they are carried out; (b) have a chairman capable of helping the commission act as a functioning group in which individual personalities, biases, and vested interests are subordinated to the majority opinion; (c) be lodged within the structure and politics of government in such a way as to insure its effectiveness; (d) employ and work with an executive and staff which, while carrying out the policies and plans of the commission, are permitted opportunity to exercise their own professional competencies.

Some characteristics of committees operate as disadvantages and are handicaps to overcome. First, the committee is an intermittent body and only when it is in session does it possess corporate authority. No individual member possesses authority (unless specifically assigned) between meetings. Second, the committee, because of its conjoint authority, is, in a certain sense, irresponsible because responsibility for action, or lack of it, cannot be fixed in the same way in which an individual can be held responsible. Unlike a single individual, the committee as a whole cannot be subjected to effective criticism and sanction. And, finally, the committee may have persons appointed to it who are indifferent or unsympathetic with the purpose and program of the unit and who accept membership only because the committee appears to offer

opportunities for the pursuit of personal or alternative objectives (14).

#### GUIDELINES TO SUCCESS FOR STATE COMMISSIONS ON AGING

There are a number of factors which determine the success or failure of boards serving a state agency on aging. One of the most important, and one which is usually beyond the ability of the commission to change, is the already mentioned appointment of the wrong persons to the committee. Yet, even in this matter, I know one courageous commission chairman who suggests to such persons that they should yield their places to others whose views and interests are compatible with those of the commission. The following discussion will enumerate some of the other determinants of success and remark upon corrective measures which may be possible in the event changes are necessary.

##### 1. Composition of the board or commission on aging

Ideally the commission will have appointed to it persons (a) who wish to serve on it, (b) who are deeply committed to aging, (c) who are dedicated to improving the welfare of the older citizens in their state, (d) who have knowledge and skill in some area of the field of aging which they are willing to contribute to the work of the commission, and (e) who have aptitude for working in concert with others to get work done by the group process. And, further, it is important that these persons represent the various segments and constituencies in the community including the clientele. The importance of bringing the right people to work together cannot be overstated. Each commission has a uniqueness depending upon its membership. Those of us who have had terms so long that we have seen changes in composition and leadership of our commissions have a special appreciation for Houle's (7) observation that "since each board has a life and a personality of its own, its nature is altered with each new member just as surely as a chemical compound is changed by pouring in a

new substance... Adding a new board member ... puts a complex human being into interaction with a complex social entity ... nothing will ever again be the same." Under such circumstances a poor committee composition may be improved by the new compound formed when the right person is added. On the other hand, the addition of the wrong person leads to an unhappy result which is difficult to correct. This does not imply that the right membership is obtained by having all committee members representing the same points of view or being equally competent in the same areas. In fact, if the members are too similar in skills and knowledge, they disagree on technical detail; if too dissimilar, they cannot communicate. The solution, I believe, is diversity which can be focused around a common interest and purpose, and a common core of knowledge about aging which can serve as a basis for communication.

## 2. Definition of purpose of the state unit on aging

If a commission is to succeed it must have more than a vague notion that it has been appointed to do some good for old people. Without a precisely stated basic framework of purpose it has no guide for its programs. The result is lack of direction in its activities and a failure to pursue consistently a line of endeavor. Good administration requires that basic goals be stated in written form and in such terms that all may understand the aims and functions of the commission.

Houle (7) recommends three steps to insure that committee members are aware of the general purposes of the agency which the committee serves. One, the executive and staff should draw up a first draft of general objectives which are then submitted to the committee for study, discussion, refinement, and ultimate endorsement by the group. Two, an annual comparison of these general purposes and the group's success in achieving them should be made in order to evaluate the committee's work and give direction to further activity. And, finally, specific

objectives to be pursued in the ensuing year should be established to make concrete accomplishment more certain. An example of this last point is the Michigan Commission on Aging which has as its goal this year the development of a 10-year state plan for aging. This project, with its June deadline, has focused effort to an extent never before achieved by the Michigan Commission.

## 3. Choice of a chairman

A third factor related to the success of a commission is its choice of a chairman. Although theoretically the chairman has no more priority in making policy and taking decisions than other members of a committee, by virtue of presiding over discussion he is able to exercise great influence on the thinking and productivity of the group. There have been many descriptions of the ideal chairman, but I doubt there has ever been a paragon so endowed as to possess all the characteristics deemed desirable. Included among the virtues most often enumerated are such statements as the chairman should command the respect of all sections of the community; he should not ally himself with a particular side or, if already so allied, should exercise an independent position on the commission; he should be neither a "yes" nor a "no" man to the administration; he should have familiarity with the subject matter of aging and should be willing to listen and learn more; he should be able to keep the committee's work in focus and keep it directed toward the achievement of its goals; he should be able to pace the work of the committee so that sound achievement comes at frequent enough intervals to motivate the group to further efforts; and he should be the kind of discussion leader who creates an atmosphere in which people are willing to think and talk together with purpose.

As a rule, members of a committee have the privilege of selecting the chairman. The attributes required by a chairman make it obvious that the nomination of persons for such positions

should be made on the basis of carefully considered judgment rather than on the spontaneous or unpremeditated recommending of some member whose name comes to mind because he is present. The result of a casual nomination may be disastrous and, even though many members may have misgivings about the wisdom of electing the person named, few have the courage to speak out in nomination of an alternate. Choice of a chairman should perhaps best be accomplished through use of a nominating committee which has opportunity to meet and make recommendations after careful consideration of the leadership potential of all possible candidates.

#### 4. Appointment of an executive

And now with reference to the executive who is to be revived by a prescribed stimulant at the end of committee meetings, the commission has one of its most important duties--the selection of the best possible executive. Although traditionally the executive is supposed to carry out the policies determined by the committee, in practice he is in a position to wield a strong hand in determining and shaping the work and programs of the committee. There are many avenues through which his influence can be made to count. It is he who (1) makes formal preparation for meetings; (2) investigates the background of issues, and selects the material and determines the emphasis he will give it when reporting to the committee; (3) collects, analyzes, and reports facts bearing on the issues about which the committee must make decisions; and (4) frames the questions for discussion. These are all functions which put the executive in a preferred position to influence the thinking and scope of the work of the committee. Moreover, he comes to have such an intimate acquaintance with the atmosphere, traditions, and methods of the group, and the peculiar foibles of the individual members that his potential influence is made even greater.

The attitude of the executive toward the committee is all-important. If he

regards the committee as an interference and nuisance in place of accepting it as a partnership for which both are responsible, an ineffective board-staff relationship is predictable. Houle (7) compares the roles of the executive and of the committee. He points out that in most cases the committee is "both legally and actually the dominant partner. It usually selects the executive, sets the conditions of his work, and, when it wishes, replaces him." On the other hand, while he serves the committee the executive has real authority, too, derived from his profession and ability. "At the very minimum," Houle remarks, "the executive deserves the respect accorded to his position as the head of the agency" and the committee must "operate always in terms of equality of approach."

The difference in roles between the committee on aging and its executive becomes more clear when it is appreciated that the committee is corporate and acts only on group decision, while the executive is individual and acts with the authority of a single person. Moreover, while the board is a continuing body whose membership may change but whose corporate body is enduring, the executive, although he has direct responsibility for operation, is not expected to continue forever in this position. A further comparison may be made in the fact that the committee is only part-time and its work does not generally represent the focal interest of any of its members; the executive, on the other hand, devotes full time to the work of the agency which thus becomes central to his life, and is, therefore, more important to him than to the commission as a whole or to any of its individual members.

The more delicate finesse required of the executive has been interestingly described by the Englishman, Hagestadt (6). He says that most committees start out by being cold and aloof and remain so until wooed or charmed into a sympathetic mood. Thus the good executive is one who will be patient with chairman and members, will rouse and retain the interest of each member in the ongoing work of the committee,

will brief himself thoroughly on all points and select the means of communication best suited to the chairman's character and tastes, will study each member of the committee and pay special attention to awkward or hostile members, will consult not only the chairman but other members of the group between meetings in a way that indicates that he places value on their opinions, and, finally, the good executive will listen to complaints and grievances and do something about them. I am sure there are those in this audience who could enlarge this list of how to manage with delicacy the varying personalities confronting them on the committee they serve. It might be a fruitful topic for discussion.

#### 5. Qualifications of committee members

Having taken the liberty of outlining the requirements of good chairmen and good executives, it does not seem unreasonable to consider the qualifications needed by good committee members. To do this I shall paraphrase a list provided by Trecher (12). First, the committee member should be thoroughly familiar with the aims and methods of the commission on aging. Second, he should be so well informed about aging and the specific aspect of the field he represents that he can express his thoughts easily and clearly, and enjoy the give and take of exchanging ideas with others on the issues the committee is considering. Third, he should realize that it is necessary to maintain direction and save the time of busy people by sticking to the task at hand. Fourth, although he may have been a professional in the field of aging or in some other area for a long time, he should be receptive and keep an open mind to learn from others. Fifth, he should sense the trends emerging in the field of aging, understand their implications, and use them for projecting the future needs of older people. Sixth, he should be fundamentally cooperative and willing to accept a group consensus even though it does not agree with his personal aims or beliefs. Seventh, he should be able to make decisions and take defini-

tive stands compatible with making progress for the best good of all generations in the population.

#### DETERMINING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMISSIONS

In order to improve the functioning of a state commission it is necessary to establish some criteria for measuring the extent and value of its work and procedures. There are probably few more frustrating ways to spend the precious commodity of time than to serve on a committee which is neither accomplishing anything nor giving promise of doing so. It is only a little less frustrating when achievement is below that warranted by the potential of the group.

The external criterion of the effectiveness of the commission is that of how much total impact it has had in bringing about significant change in practices and provisions for older citizens through such channels as the legislature, local communities, voluntary organizations, public agencies, professional organizations, and organized groups of older people. It can also be predicted that the effectiveness of a commission bears a direct relationship to its willingness and courage to grapple with the major problems confronting older people. It is not enough to agree and take action on noncontroversial issues such as supporting programs of education for and about aging, of promoting formation of local community committees on aging, of having a booth at the state fair, of issuing news sheets which chronicle the doings of this or that group, of getting publicity for itself in the newspapers and other media, of supporting antidiscrimination laws for the employment of older workers, or of issuing hunting and fishing licenses to the over-65-year-olds. Not that any of these activities are inappropriate or undesirable; they should be a part of the program of any commission on aging. But they are not enough. The commission which is fulfilling its true purpose--that of bringing about major change to benefit older people--must grapple with the difficult issues, those on which there will almost certainly be strongly divided opinion among commission members or at least very different ideas about how the changes are

to be brought about. The strong commission will come to grips with the problems of taxation of older people, of the cost of their medical care, of how to provide low-cost housing and change zoning laws and bring about city planning to accommodate elderly people, of the after-care of rehabilitated geriatric mental patients, of the licensing of facilities to care for those persons who can no longer live independently, and with a host of other critical and perplexing unfulfilled needs. To exert maximum influence, the commission acting conjointly must arrive at decisions regarding the stand it will take on all vital issues and then must design action programs to see that its decisions are taken seriously by the appropriate agencies and governmental bodies. The influence of such dynamic commissions is felt at every level of government and of community life. This type of commission can become the rallying point around which all the resources of the state can be mobilized and from which all the potentials of communities and organizations can be energized.

Such a high level of aspiration and achievement implies that the commission is operationally and psychologically in excellent health. It must have learned and be practicing the techniques necessary to achieve a maximally productive level of function. To put it in poetic form I shall quote Lucile Lippitt's (8) description of committees at work. "They dig into the situation at hand, turn to the light of day new possibilities, make the ground ready for planting, pull up the weeds of ignorance or prejudice by their constant ministrations, and refresh the roots of the movement by keeping the earth loose and receptive to the sun and rain of new ideas and new ways to work."

Although I shall not discuss specific methods for conducting board or commission meetings, I do want to point out that the demonstration on group decision-making just provided by Dr. Harvey<sup>1</sup> illustrates an essential tool every committee or board should be able to use. This technique for bringing about conjoint thinking, which requires the abandonment by all members of the group of their tendency

<sup>1</sup> During the preceding session of the Conference, Jerry B. Harvey, Ph.D., Program Director, National Training Laboratories, National Education Association, had conducted an interesting demonstration on working with groups.

to cling to their opinions, can be consciously practiced. Constructive conflict which can be resolved through integration of interests in which both sides find they have a place will allow commissions to attack and get decisions on the fundamental and difficult problems enumerated above.

In addition to measuring the effectiveness of state units on aging by their total impact in bringing about change and by their psychological health as evidenced by their ability to deal with difficult and controversial problems, there are other criteria of a more internal nature which can be used to measure the productiveness of meetings, the satisfaction of members, and usefulness of the board as a whole. Such criteria as how often and for how long commissions should meet, how much and what type of service they need from their executives and staff, and what principles should guide their work have been well defined by researchers on the group process.

Guetzkow (5), for example, studied the general characteristics and effectiveness of interagency governmental committees. He found only three factors from among those he studied which were directly related to effective committee function: frequency of meetings (the more often, the better), the length of meetings (3-hour preferred over 2-hour meetings), and the type of secretarial service provided the committee (having its own secretariat which served no other group is the preferred arrangement). It may be added that those members who attended meetings regularly were more satisfied with the committee than those who attended infrequently. Also, committees with heavy workloads and thus operating under constant time-pressure tended to be highly efficient in meetings. One may conclude that frequent meetings of long enough duration so that members can learn person-to-person interaction patterns will be the most efficient and most productive.

Commissions interested in evaluating themselves will find a number of instruments available. Houle (7), for example, offers a scale of 12 items, each of which can be rated on five points ranging from excellent to very poor. The criteria used include the makeup of the board, the relationships between board and executive and between the board and the community

it serves, and the performance of individual members. Audrey and Harleigh Trecker (13) have defined 14 basic principles for committee work which they consider as rules of thumb and which, if followed, will insure effective committee work. The committee on aging interested in evaluating itself might well examine its function in relationship to these 14 principles and, also, rate itself on the Houle Scale. Self-examination, if it does not become a preoccupation, may be very useful in improving function of a group.

#### THE OPERATION OF STATE COMMISSIONS ON AGING

My assignment calls for some discussion on specific measures which may be employed to increase the level of performance of state units on aging. My ideas will not be new for most if not all of them, and more too, will already have been tried. In fact, a number of the suggestions have been collected from the executives of various state units on aging. My excuse for offering them here is that they may represent an accumulated list not now available. Following are, then, a few recommendations for building a strong commission.

A first step may be that of getting to know one another. Committee members must know and respect the capabilities and knowledge of each other. Our natural heritage of self-protection makes us view the stranger as potentially hostile until his characteristics and behavior become known to us.

It is not enough to publish a "Who's Who" on the commission. A cold recital of educational and experiential backgrounds may only serve to increase fear and lead to conclusions that individuals must inevitably hold views alien to our own. Nothing can replace person-to-person discussion in an informal setting where the dangers of letting down barriers between personalities are minimized because the relationships are unofficial. Almost universally we come to like and respect another person when we learn of his hopes and aspirations and of his disappointments. All this implies that opportunity should be provided for informal discussions between the executive

and the individual committee members, and between the committee members themselves. These extracurricular discussions may take place before or after meetings, but it is my observation that the busy people on a committee arrive exactly on time and depart immediately when the committee adjourns. Thus, each one sees only that side of the personality of another member which represents official behavior. The most dogmatic and most misguided (in one's personal opinion) and, thus, the most annoying member may be a thoroughly charming character whose behavior would be clearly understandable if his background and social orientation were known.

The state executive and commission chairman will, I believe, do well to bring about opportunities which offer commission members the chance for mutual acquaintanceship. Doing something unofficial together is one means of accomplishing this goal.

A second need is that of developing esteem for the work of the agency. Most members joining a commission have been singled out for appointment by some higher authority. They have been selected because they represent a specific constituency or have a special skill needed on the committee. Membership is considered an honor because to be especially selected from among one's peers to do a special task has this connotation. However, the sense of honor is a personal thing; it may not extend at all to pride in the work of the body to which one has been appointed.

To develop esteem for the agency, it is necessary for a newly appointed member to know what the unit has accomplished. Annual reports are useful but they are often written in "agencyese" which is an uninteresting and uninspiring style to most citizens. Besides, these reports seem long and represent at best a disconnected story which the new member has to put together for himself if he is to get a complete picture of the agency's achievements. But just how exciting the full story of a state committee on aging can be is typified in the tale of the California Citizen's Advisory Committee on Aging which appears in the March 1964 issue of Aging (2). What member of this committee, new or old, can read this historical chronicle of accomplishment without obtaining a sense of satisfaction and having a desire

to participate in, and contribute to, the work of a body which has been so creative in thinking and achieved so much? In reading the story one learns some of the reasons why the California Committee has been successful. Its inspired leadership is unquestionably a major factor but, beyond this, one senses the vast involvement of community leaders throughout the State who are constantly being helped and supported in their local work by the various members of the State Committee. The pattern was set for this type of development back in 1951 when the first California Conference on Aging brought together thousands of citizens from every part of the State, but the fruition of that meeting has been achieved by the continuous efforts of the State Committee to maintain and increase local involvement in the development and support of programs and services for older people.

It would be too much to ask the Office of Aging to do a comprehensive story on every state unit on aging, and a number of us probably are not ready for it anyway, but I would like to recommend that the California story constitute the first of a series. Such recognition would provide kudos for states so honored and enhance the desirability of membership on controlling or advisory committees. But more importantly, it would serve the broader purpose of underscoring the fact that some type of state unit on aging is today's major governmental instrument for coordinating efforts within a state on behalf of its older citizens.

Finally, in concluding, I shall discuss how a committee member's knowledge about aging may be increased. Generally, the members appointed to state committees on aging, although they are usually highly knowledgeable and effective in their own fields of endeavor, may know virtually nothing about aging. Many, I fear, maintain this state of ignorant bliss for the full time of their appointments. At best, there is wide variation in the knowledge about aging and about the emerging trends in the field. As already mentioned, it is essential that all commission members share a common core of knowledge about the processes of aging. They should also know about the unmet needs of older people in our society and especially in their own states. They should be informed about the steps that have already been

taken or are under discussion for solving the problems troubling older people. Information about the programs of agencies and organizations working in the field and the possible sources of funds to support the work of the commissions and of local agencies should likewise be the common currency of all members of a committee serving a state unit on aging.

It is far less difficult to enumerate what common knowledge should be possessed than it is to suggest ways by which busy commissioners, whose primary interests are not in aging, can be motivated, charmed, or trapped into acquiring the needed information. Every chairman and executive has, I'm sure, tried a number of techniques. Some of the methods used include the following:

- Assignment to subcommittees where comprehensive information is needed to carry out the committee's tasks;
- Staking out the major areas of the field and asking that at least one person become expert in each area;
- Asking committee members to speak at various meetings as representatives of the agency and to serve as consultants to local communities seeking advice;
- Suggesting that each member develop a special project in aging for which he has major responsibility;
- Recommending that members with special competencies or new ideas prepare reports on them which can be published;
- Appointing as chairmen of subcommittees persons who are not commission members in order to add needed specialized knowledge not represented on the commission;
- Sending members reading matter at regular intervals, including copies of relevant bills introduced in the legislature to which a brief summary or digest of the bill has been attached (and later advising about the fate of the bill);
- Abstracting for members the overlong or overtechnical reports;

- Subscribing to Aging for each member of the committee so that the work of a particular state can be seen in the national perspective;
- Inviting specialists to report to the committee on some specific aspects of the field;
- Bringing in the Regional Representatives of the Office of Aging to review the goals and progress of the committee and to learn from them firsthand about new resources that have become available;
- Holding retreats for committees of 2 or 3 days' duration during which the members hear speakers or make reports.

The list could be extended and an evaluation could be made of the effectiveness of the various methods used. These tasks, however, I shall leave for the later discussion, but I do want to make one other recommendation for increasing the knowledge of committee members and thus, hopefully, increasing their competency. I believe we should make a direct approach by offering training, not especially on how to be a committee member, although that might be a byproduct, but on aging specifically. So important has become the need to know about aging that practically all professional and other groups find it necessary to hold training institutes on aging for their members. College teachers spend a week or month together acquiring new knowledge in social and behavioral gerontology, religious leaders gather for a week or 10 days' intensive institute, housing managers are brought together for a 3- or 4-day learning session, nursing home administrators spend 6 weeks on college campuses in workshops, social case workers sign up for a week-long training program. And so it goes throughout the field, except for members of committees who are supposed to be the specialists and leaders in the field of aging in their respective states.

Why not hold regional residential training institutes of from 1 to 2 weeks' duration for members of state committees and boards on aging? Sponsorship could be the joint responsibility of the new National Association of State Units on Aging and the Office of Aging. Each

Regional Representative of the Office of Aging could serve as the organizer in his own region. Funds might be obtained and combined from a number of sources such as the various government agencies that have training grants as part of their programs, the technical assistance program of the National Institute of Mental Health, and various state agency training funds. The resources of colleges and universities could be added. Ideally the funds would provide for the travel and subsistence of the trainee (committee member) and for the salaries of instructors. The curriculum for the institute could be developed by the Training and Research Division of the Office of Aging in collaboration with the state executives. There are already books and other teaching materials available (1) (3) (9) (10) (11) (12). The University of Chicago has been offering a course for board members since 1950. A new report from the Council of State Governments on State Units of Aging (4) would also supply background material. The curriculum need not be elaborate nor difficult, but it should provide for such basic instruction as an overview of social gerontology, the biological and psychological nature of the aging process, the problem areas in aging and the available solutions and needed innovations, and especially what community planning is being done and what basic philosophies have emerged. By properly planning and siting the residential training institute and restricting the privilege of attendance to committee members, the institute might prove an irresistible lure to enough persons to insure that the number of informed persons on the state committees would be materially increased. The resources for such a training program are certainly available and there is, I believe, general agreement on need. I can only ask why not take the bold steps necessary to insure that those who are leaders in the field of aging are properly equipped with the knowledge needed to achieve the highest purposes entrusted to them.

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## Looking Ahead

By Harold L. Sheppard, Ph.D., Research Associate,  
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I want to make one point to begin with-- this task is impossible. I've taken about 50 pages of notes and talked to three of the five recorders for the sessions and realized that it was a great mistake to accept this assignment! Unlike so many of the other people, I couldn't prepare my speech in advance of the conference.

"Looking Ahead" is the presumed title of my remarks and I should point out that this is a responsibility of a sociologist which I am, primarily, and only in a secondary way an economist, although I happen to be of that breed of social scientist who doesn't like to think of water-tight compartments between sociology and economics and political science and so on. In fact, I call myself at the Upjohn Institute a "Staff Social Scientist" now to confuse everybody.

I think we are now fast moving into a period where our problems have to be dealt with from a multidisciplinary point of view. "Looking Ahead" is a term that could be derived from the field of sociology. One of the granddaddies of that field is August Comte who advocated that we observe in order to predict, and predict in order to have control and mastery over our lives and our social problems.

But there's another old French saying that "with patience all things can be accomplished" ("avec de la patience on arrive à tout").

Now, I've tried to live with this bit of wisdom but, unfortunately, I happen to be one of the most impatient persons in the world and I think I can make a good case for the argument that there is too much patience in the world today. It's a type of patience that tolerates delays, complicated procedures, and interminable rehashing of polarized positions in all of our national and local efforts to meet the problems of our fast moving, modernizing society.

What does that mean in terms of this conference? Since I'm now with a private foundation I can afford to be quite independent and critical. I have the feeling that I'm back where I started 5 years ago--so many of the issues being rehashed--instead of our going forward. I know that here and there are signs of progress over the last 5 years. But--and I believe this was mentioned by some people in the conference--if you were to take the White House Conference recommendations and go down them one by one and ask, what have we done to act on them, I think the batting average would be rather disappointing. (Some of my friends tell me that what I need is a few serious personal problems of my own so that I'll have less room for empathizing with the aged or the unemployed or with minority groups. But until I do get some more serious personal problems I will continue to be impatient and also to express that impatience.)

As I've said before, I have the feeling that this is where I came in 5 years ago, in listening to much of the discussions of this conference. There was quibbling about terminology--e.g., should we call people "old" or "senior citizens" or "elderly"--this is not serious discussion, in my opinion. But nevertheless, many important things have been said over the past 2 days and this morning. And in the hope that repetition will bring them home to you, I want to single out some of these items mentioned during the past few days. Bringing them home to you, I pray that you will bring them home and implement them or communicate about them with the organizations, the communities, and individuals that you all deal with on a day-to-day basis.

First, some observations about planning: We cannot escape the need for planning. And yet I sensed different degrees

of resistance to the very word. Some of this resistance seems to be based on a naive belief that planning means compulsory standardization and uniformity. To begin with, planning need not result in mandatory behavior. Second, planning is perfectly compatible with the fact of individual and group differences and with changes over time. In fact, I would include planning for such differences and changes as a basic element in the definition of intelligent planning.

When General Motors makes a monumental decision to invest \$5 billion in new plant and equipment over the next few years, that is an act of planning. And you know as well as I that a wide degree of variations in car styles, sizes, and prices will be made available to all of us. And nobody will be forced to buy a car, or to buy a car that he doesn't like. The advanced preparation for the future that this mass-impact decision requires is perhaps the greatest single phenomenon of private planning that we will have seen for some time in our lives.

When the multibillion dollar system of our vast university world takes a look at the population figures of college-age Americans for the next year and for the next 10 years, that system, both public and private, launches a gigantic program of advanced planning--planning for the real estate and bricks and mortar necessary to provide educational services to that population--planning for attracting and keeping adequate faculties to educate that population. Some of this is public. Some of it is private, and a great deal of that is done with government funds. None of it is compulsory--although I see nothing wrong with compulsory education. Sometimes I feel there's something wrong in not having compulsory college education, under certain conditions, for college-age Americans.

Right now I'll settle for compulsory effective education for all Americans through high school age, with adequate programs to meet the problems of actual and potential dropouts. In talking about that, I think the solution of the problem will in turn affect the future of the problems of the aged, 20 to 40 or so years from now. So planning in the education sphere is a must.

As George Grier stated the other day, "advance planning is most needed where

growth and change is most rapid." With respect to our aged population in which growth and change is taking place on a revolutionary scale, or as I think Sid Spector and I said in one of our early reports for the Senate "a quiet revolution," very little planning is taking place either on an individual basis or on a social basis.

On this point of planning, which consists of acting now in order to prevent something in the future or to achieve something in the future, I believe we Americans have complacently accepted the notion that the social security system as it was created back in the 1930's, and as it now exists, constitutes the final plan, and that the future is therefore provided for. There is no such thing as a fixed plan in any intelligent scheme of things.

If we are genuinely serious about the war on poverty, we must begin planning in fields of education and social security--or more concretely, retirement income--that is, acting now to affect the future.

How many of you know, for example, that while we have made great strides over the past decades in reducing the proportion of Americans defined as poor, we have not reduced the proportion of poor who are aged? That is, 10 years ago, for example, one-third of all the poor families were aged, and today, one-third of all the poor families are aged. Today 14 percent of all families are headed by someone 65 or older but 34 percent of the poor families are headed by an aged person.

Here, then, is the challenge, a goal toward which to plan--the reduction of that 34 percent to something approximating the national average of today which is about 20 percent--the one-fifth that we define as being poor.

If nothing else, we should now be launching local, state, and national programs that will radically reduce the probabilities that an American aged 50-55 today will be below the poverty line in 1974, and that an American aged 40-55 today will be below the poverty line in, if you'll excuse the expression, 1984. I see very few signs today that assure me that we have significantly reduced the prospects for poverty among the aged of tomorrow. And that's you and me.

It is one thing to say that more than 20 million Americans now work for companies that have private pensions. It's quite another thing to say with certainty

that these 20 million will actually retire with a private pension.

Today roughly 40 percent of all spending units headed by a nonretired person 30 years or older are covered by both social security and private pensions. But not all of these people will actually retire with both social security and a private pension.

Today roughly 54 percent of all spending units headed by a nonretired person 30 years of age or older have coverage from social security only. Under present expectations of social security benefits for the future, I frankly do not see how this 54 percent, for the most part, will derive any comfort from the so-called floor of security which I think George Grier described the other day as being "under water."

If the basic principle motivating the present administration is to eliminate dependency and poverty, I can think of no greater obligation of the Office of Aging, and the other agencies in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and all the other government agencies involved, than to promote a searching inquiry into the need for revamping social security benefit levels even at the so-called cost of increasing contributions and into the need for improving private pension provisions so that they will perform their sensible purpose, namely, to provide retirement incomes for those people now covered at the time they retire.

We have to look at this from the standpoint of what would be the cost of not improving the retirement income of tomorrow's aged. And in this connection I'd like to go back to the text of the second year's report of the Senate Committee on Aging and point out something else along the same lines. I think there's one major flaw that characterizes much of the ordinary discussion about the income status of our aged citizens. This is a failure to reckon with the dynamic nature of the problem. For example, when it is said that the median money income of aged family heads as a percentage of the median income of all families dropped from 60 percent in 1949 to 52 percent in 1959, there seems to be a tacit assumption that the aged of 1959 are the same people as the aged in 1949, but they are not exactly the same. The 4.8 million men and 5.5 million women aged 65 to 74 in 1960 were not aged in 1950, for example. The crucial question

is, what changes take place in the incomes of the given aged group as it moves into retirement status? When we say that between 1949 and 1959 the income of the male aged population increased 55 percent we're not really talking about the same people. In reality, the median income of men aged 55 to 64 in 1949 was \$2,366, but by 1959--10 years later--the same men, minus those who had died, experienced, not an increase in their median income, but a decrease.

The best data available on this point at least at the time the Senate report was written was provided by the Bureau of the Census in its January 1961 report on 1959 incomes. The median income for men born in March 1895 and earlier was \$1,710 in 1949; 10 years later the median income of the same group, the same bodies, had decreased 8 percent. These figures, moreover, are in current dollars, not constant ones. "An analysis using constant 1959 dollars would reveal that this group of men suffered an approximate 33 percent decrease in real income from 1949 to 1959, while during the same period real median income of men aged 24-34 in 1949 increased by approximately 56 percent and for men aged 34-44 in 1949 the increase was approximately 34 percent. The same analysis could be applied to changes in assets and savings.

"In all of this, it is important to recognize another aspect that is too often neglected--namely, the effect of rising expectations in the general population, expectations that do not automatically abate upon retirement. This aspect further aggravates the problem of adequate income for future generations of retired Americans, and increasing numbers of such persons will be more insistent on an adequate income than past generations of retirees. The younger Americans of today will carry into their own retirement of tomorrow many expectations and aspirations that cannot be met if their retirement status is no better than that of the aged of today."

To get to another point, a brief statement was made by Morris Zelditch the other day which struck a vital chord with me. He said that a state commission on aging does nothing for a single aged person--that it is typically a locality that directly acts and provides services. The same could be said for the Federal Government.

Like the States, the Federal Government does not work directly with the individual aged person in a given community.

The crucial point is that without local interest, local initiative, and local organization, the best structure and the best financed fund at the state and Federal levels can mean virtually zero. Too often this type of observation is distorted to mean, however, that if we don't hear from the folks at the grass roots level, if they don't initiate requests for some program or consultation, it's not our fault. We'll sit behind our desks and wait for the phone to ring.

We must not reward those professional directors and administrators who act as if their mission in life is to show the legislatures and budget directors how much they have left unspent at the end of the fiscal year. That is, rewards must go to those men and women who aggressively but effectively work with local communities in stimulating private and public grass-roots actions to meet the needs of older people in their communities.

The genius of American progress consists of our ability to make a workable process out of what many foreigners view as a Rube Goldberg concoction, that is, our so-called system of relationships between and among the Federal levels, the state governmental levels, county and municipal entities, further compounded by our myriad of private agencies, foundations, and organizations.

Too often this pattern is viewed as one that consists of hostile forces and counterforces, of interventionism by a foreign power which is based in an alien land called Washington, D.C. Every 2 years or 4 years or 6 years we take a person from a state or part of a state, or who represents or originates from a particular economic or social group, and we elect him to join that foreign power. But that's not the way it should be viewed, and that's not the way the process really works.

Let me give a recent case study. It has to do with South Bend, Indiana. This was the situation brought about by the sudden announcement and shutdown of the Studebaker Corporation in South Bend. This was a situation involving approximately 7,000 workers, the average age of whom is 55. We're talking about an older worker problem--a work force that a few

months prior to the shutdown constituted 10 percent of the total work force of South Bend and the labor market area of South Bend.

To make a very long story short, there were enough people in that local area to recognize the specific needs of the at least 40 percent of that work force who were over the age of 50. I had been sort of "shanghaied" back into the Government service to work for, and with, the Federal agencies and the local communities and state organizations in meeting some of the problems brought about by that shutdown. Fortunately, I knew about the possible programs available at the Federal level. I say at the Federal level rather than merely a Federal program because, for example, the Department of Labor has a contract with the National Council on the Aging to stimulate projects at the local level concerning the problems of older workers in at least five cities.

While grabbing hold of that bit of knowledge, before long I was able to get Dorothy McCamman and Norman Sprague from the National Council to come directly to South Bend and we met with a regional representative from the Department of Labor's Office of Manpower, Automation, and Training and the local people. Before a few minutes were over the local director of a private organization, United Community Services, was pointing the way. He worked overnight and he worked me overnight in drawing up a project, which I think Geneva Mathiesen has described as one of the most sophisticated projects she has ever seen, aimed at treating the problems of those older displaced workers who do not immediately get jobs again--those older workers who, for a variety of reasons you should already appreciate, do not jump at the opportunity for training programs. It was a program that involved directly the key decision makers in that town, namely the business leaders and labor leaders to tie together the needs of the older worker and job abilities in the local industry, as well as an attempt, perhaps for the first time--I know it will be for the first time if it is worked out--to see whether or not older workers can be helped to move to job opportunities elsewhere under a new provision in the 1963 amendments to the Manpower, Development, and Training Act.

Here is a case where Federal money was available but it meant nothing if there was not a local organization with a local dynamic leadership ready to take the ball and carry it. And we still can't get over the dynamo character of the man I'm talking about--William Aramony.

So the South Bend story is to me, first of all, a perfect example of action between the local level and the national level and the state level, between the private and the public. And this is the nature of our particular country, it seems to me. Also, it was a program geared towards eliminating or preventing poverty. The people in South Bend immediately saw that, if they did not act towards such an end in this project, the welfare case loads would be unbearable. I don't want to give you all the statistics but they run into the millions of dollars.

An interesting sidelight was a reaction that one found quite frequently in South Bend--the belief that since these are older workers they don't have many dependents, and therefore the problem is not too great. Well, it so happens that for the 7,000 workers there were something like 8,500 children aged 18 years of age and younger; altogether, counting wives and older relatives, there were 13,000 dependents. So the welfare load for that size of a community would be unbearable.

Another point I want to make--and this might be considered a side remark but I think it is important and I haven't said this sort of thing in a public situation yet so you're a captive audience--I think the quick action that was possible at South Bend could not have been possible in New York City, Chicago, Cleveland, and so on. I think we're coming to the point where we have to take another look at the maximum size of cities. The problems of communication, the problems of consensus and decision making and the problems of coordination are getting to be too great, as far as I can tell, for the megalopolis that we are doing nothing about preventing.

The difference between the South Bend situation and the usual community pattern is that it was a catastrophic event that galvanized the whole community into action, a plant shutdown directly affecting 10 percent of the working population. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the usual community situation of older citizens is not

like an acute illness striking suddenly. It is rather like a chronic illness that develops by bits and pieces and lingers on without any necessary dramatic crisis. We're equipped for emergencies like an earthquake or a flood disaster, but we do not act with any urgency about water pollution, land erosion, or the slow but steady dwindling away of natural resources. So it is when we deal with older persons and their conditions. And so the typical commission on aging at the state or even the local level has a much more difficult task to perform.

It is your job to exploit all the resources and techniques discussed at this meeting, and more, so that we do not allow drift to determine our future. Legislatures need to be made more a part of the planning process, and you've heard about that. They need to be made part of the process at initial stages and not merely at the stage that calls for authorization and appropriation. And this has to be done on a sustained basis and not on a temporary or overnight basis. We must assure ourselves of permanent state agencies with public members becoming more identified psychologically with the subject matter of gerontology by using the techniques suggested by Wilma Donahue and the panel this morning. We so-called professionals and experts in the field of aging make no real contribution in the final analysis if we do not translate and communicate our ideas and findings to the key decision makers in public and private spheres of life. In fact, we cannot afford the luxury of neat separations between the expert and the men and women of action and power. The world of business and labor leaders, for example, is increasingly made up of people who want to be kept informed of knowledge and trends in conditions outside of their own narrow occupational experiences. The same is true--at least on the Congressional level here in Washington which I know about--of the political leaders. All of them must be made part of our efforts to create opportunities for older persons. It also has been brought out that perhaps one way to do this, among the many ways, is to inform the legislators, the individual legislators, of the problems in their own specific districts.

Looking ahead, as Burt Aycock has labelled my remarks which have been

based on looking backwards to the discussions of the past 2 days, I see intensification of the challenges to people like ourselves dedicated to creating opportunities for older persons and a justification brought about by the dynamics described by George Grier--the dynamics created by the changes and trends related to population, economics, and technology. For much of our future productivity increases will be translated into goods and services going mostly to the employed population. Much of it will be translated to longer years of retirement by virtue of the trend toward earlier retirement; much as we might talk about and bemoan the fact, a lower retirement age seems to be a trend. I think it's one of the almost inevitable trends. We're going to have more Americans not only living longer, thanks to medical science but also due to a general population increase, and more Americans living in conditions of retirement. The only basic exception to this earlier retirement will probably be found in the greater use of older persons trained in a variety of professional pursuits, including to some extent, men and women skilled in business management and consultation--for example, the program now being started by Small Business Administration and perhaps also the new poverty program. This includes teachers and scientists and people in the social services, too.

But let's not forget that most older Americans are not in these occupations. And let's not forget that the older persons among the aged are increasing at a greater rate than the total population of the 65-plus group. Between 1960 and 1975, to repeat some facts you've heard before, the 85-plus group will increase by nearly 80 percent while the total aged population will increase by only 33 percent. Here is another example of a need for diversified planning and on the flexible basis that you and I move from being in our 60's to our 70's to our 80's.

Looking ahead, I can see a greater recognition of the need for the Federal Government to increase its participation, financially as well as functionally, in the services for the older segment of the population, not just through Old-Age and Survivor's Insurance. Despite all of the Birch-type distortions in the public mind, the number of Federal employees has

increased only by 33,000 per year since 1950; in fact, I think it's stabilized in more recent years and certainly within the last 3 months. At the same time the number of state and local government employees has increased by more than 166,000 per year. Since the end of World War II the amount of Federal taxes collected each year has increased 100 percent, while state and local taxes have increased 600 percent. Before long, the local units of government, especially at levels below the state level, will reach a point where they'll have to turn more than now to the state government and to the Federal Government for financing many of the services they now provide. Grants and aids in all fields have already doubled since 1958 from the Federal Government to the state and local governments but this is not true in the fields of health, education, and welfare. Federal aid to state and local governments in these fields has not doubled; it's increased perhaps by two-thirds to three-fourths.

Looking ahead I can see a greater concentration of the dilemma, the paradox posed by the emergence of the truly national economy and the anachronistic rules and regulations more appropriate to a localized quasi-rural society. On the one hand, we encourage, we almost insist on, labor mobility, for example, from one region to another to follow the economic opportunities that exist and where they exist. This focus, for one thing, means the breakup of the type of tightly knit extended family that underlies much of our social philosophy concerning the responsibility of the family toward aged relatives. On the other hand, we cling to such outmoded facts as resident requirements--some evidence of tribal affiliation--as a condition for assistance and services from the local unit of government.

My wife works for a private social agency here in Washington. Let me just give you one type of story that makes her impatient and makes her wish she could become "disengaged." This is an example of a 67-year-old woman who has come to a private social agency because the great public agency of our great Nation's capital will not give her any assistance since she is not considered a resident of the District of Columbia.

It so happens that some years ago she had lived in the District of Columbia for 30 years and owned a home here. But trying to be a model American, she started to travel a lot and now she's forced to come back here, being impoverished. Her husband is in a hospital and she can't get her year's residence in. So she has to beg and steal and it's not surprising, at least not to me, that every once in awhile she gets a little drunk. And every time she gets drunk, having no relatives to protect her like most of us, she's picked up and put into jail. And do you know that each time she's in jail she has to start all over again to get that one year's residence? She just can't make it for one solid year. My wife refers her to other public agencies and sooner or later they're going to ask her some of these residence questions and they're going to trap her and she won't be able to get the medical care that my wife tries to get for her. So when she's kicked out of the hospital (she has a severe case of edema) she finds a few pennies and goes out on a binge, for which I can't blame her. She's penalized for each time in jail--because of our tribalistic requirements.

Along with this type of development, there will be a greater recognition of the multigeneration facets of our older population. Take the ratio of the people 60-64 to the people 80 and over, the people 80 and over being primarily the older relatives of the people who are just beginning to enter old age. That ratio will double between now and the year 2000--and the year 2000 isn't too far away. That's the period when our youth will start entering the status of "old age." The 25-year-old of 1960 will be 65 years old in the year 2000 and the odds are that two out of three of such people will have an older relative 80 years or older. And it will be typical to see the problems of 80 and over being taken care of by their "kids" (aged 60-64) who in turn will have 40-year-old children who are trying to put their kids through school. We've got to have more community responsibility for this type of multigeneration situation.

Looking ahead, we can also see a greater appreciation of the positive importance and function of meeting the needs of an aging population as a major element in

the Nation's economic growth as a whole. I would like to recommend that all of you get copies of the Manpower Report to the President recently submitted to Congress by the Department of Labor. One of the pearls in that document is the point that manufacturing, for example, is no longer the solid source of jobs and economic growth that it once was. Instead, the so-called services industry is the growing one and I would include in that broad category the health industry and the leisure-time industries. Whether we look upon these industries as indicative of progress or indicative of problems, they constitute broad categories of job-and-business-creating activity that actually and potentially include older Americans as consumers of their goods, facilities, and services. So far, the greatest increase in jobs with regard to servicing the older Americans happen to be with state and local government and not with private industry. Now none of this will happen automatically--this increase in job opportunities and economic growth. On the one end of demand it's up to people like yourselves to make sure that older Americans will have the effective access to individual and social mechanisms to obtain the use of such goods and services so that they can be assured of the dignity and independence that all of us want for ourselves before entering retirement, as well as the free choice and opportunity for meaningful activities in the later years. On the other end of supply, it is also up to people like yourselves and myself to make sure that commercial and public services are made available in the form of facilities and personnel adequately trained and adequately rewarded to perform those roles appropriate to making real the potential opportunity for older citizens now and in the future.

Underlying all of these remarks about needs and principles relating to the status of older Americans there is one basic point that must be stated over and over again, and forever, and I don't think I heard this sort of thing the past few days: our society, our economy, our technology are truly capable of achieving the conditions for improving the opportunities and lives of the retired population. Whether or not we actually create those opportunities depends on our will and on our

value systems as individuals and as a society. There's reason to believe that by virtue of your choice of service in the field of aging you already are committed to those decisions and policies that will actually lead to the creation of those opportunities. If I am wrong in that belief,

then just what are you doing here? If I am right, then what will you do this year and next, back in your own states and local communities? And with your representatives in your Nation's capital?

# # #

## The Creative Challenge of Aging

By Rabbi Rudolph M. Rosenthal, The Temple  
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Every day we age a little, every day we die a little. That is why in regard to age, we echo the words of Shakespeare, "he jests at scars that never felt a wound." Mankind disguises through humor its growing concern with the erosion of age. We enunciate bons mots and epigrams, sardonic, suave, or subtle. We say, "a woman is as young as she looks, a man is young as long as he looks." The difference is not how old we are but how we are old. I like the statement attributed to Bernard Baruch, who has reached the age of 93, "old age is always 10 years later than my next birthday." There is, of course, the thrust of Ambrose Bierce, "you are not permitted to kill a woman who has injured you, but nothing forbids you to reflect that she is growing older every minute--you are avenged 1,440 times a day."

It remained for Benjamin Franklin, that most sapient of Americans, to put his finger precisely on the problem, "all would like to live long but none would like to become old."

Recently a 74-year-old woman was found wandering around the streets of St. Louis. Our generation saw her very frequently in motion pictures. She earned a seven-figure salary each year. Many of us knew of her as a movie queen. Literally, she was a princess, having married a Russian prince. She did not live happily ever after with him--or her other two husbands. The blazing intensity of this incident was revealed in the remark of her son. Advised of her misadventure, he answered with calm, cold measured words, "whatever I have to do, I will do."

One can't help but contrast the queen of the flickering shadows with another queen. When Edward VII was Prince of Wales, he was accosted by a beggar who did not recognize the scion of royalty. The mendicant requested aid. The Prince of Wales replied, "I will show you the

picture of my mother." To the amazement of the beggar, he brought out a coin--on it was the portrait of Queen Victoria. Two women, two queens--one still reigned in the heart of her son, the other no longer ruled in the affection of a generation in which spontaneous sympathy was no longer structured--a society, in which, unfortunately, gratitude, defined as the mother of all virtues, has been forgotten.

Today our chairman, Dr. Kent, has introduced a reverse procedure. Ordinarily, a session is attended by a group of amateurs and an expert is called in to summarize. Instead, our chairman, has imported an amateur to encapsulate the observations of professionals. I plead guilty of being an "amateur"--from the Latin word meaning "lover"--lover of humanity.

In the face of all you experts, I do not plan to quote that which Disraeli designated as, "lies, darn lies and statistics." Today there are 18 million people who are 65 or older. Every day more than a thousand people join their ranks. They constitute, these elder citizens, a larger group than all of the farm labor of the United States; indeed, they outnumber all the forces of organized labor.

There are some statistics that are interesting. Most of us when we reach the age of 65, will possess eight of our original teeth. Do you know that one of us out of 33,000 will attain the age of 100? We can see the contrast in our time and previous ages. In 1856, a woman passed away at the age of 45; the cause of death was listed as advanced old age. For the most part, we are informed, we will live 20 years longer than our grandparents. The term "aging" I take to be 65, from the book The Senior Citizen, by Dr. Ralph B. Beatty, in which he remarks on page 120, "The age of 65 gets unexpected support according to a biological criterion of aging. For all males at birth, the average

life expectancy for thirteen European countries of Western culture is 65."

In 1900, those aged 65 or over accounted for 4.1% of our national population. Today they represent almost 14% of our population.

What we have to recognize is that employment opportunities for older people have been affected by increasing industrialization and migration of workers to the city. Together with the needs for better housing, food, etc., there is a hunger for what Robert Browning said, "we live by love, admiration and praise." Freud has summarized life as, "Liebe und Arbeit." Love and work.

A man born in 1900 had a life expectancy of 48 years. If the same individual had come into the world in 1960, his life expectation would be at least 66 years. It might be interesting to know that Burgess, Aging in Western Society, on page 12 says "that the Netherlands has the highest life expectancy at birth of any country in the world." Now why should the lengthening of the life span create anything but happiness? Certainly our prayers are instinct with the passion for life and more life. After all, in our society we do not kill the feeble old because they cannot work and therefore do not eat. Actually, only 3% of our people are helpless enough to be shut away in custodial institutions. Why so much unhappiness and concern over the predicament of the aged?

One of the reasons why age in America evokes fear and dread, rather than respect and love, is the low estate in which age is regarded. Our families are increasingly "other-directed." This means in substance, that our standards, our values, even our instructions emerge not out of the experience of the family, which would make it "inner-directed." Instead, we are invaded from the outside; mass and communication media interweave in our lives. We find our young people rearing their children by the expertise of outsiders. What remains of the role of the older generation? Their advice is disregarded. Their counsel is rejected as old-fashioned and outmoded. Job said, "with the ancient is wisdom and length of days." Our older people have lost their vocation, like Othello they cry out, "Farewell, Othello's occupation's gone." For them the words of a contemporary poetess

reflect their mood, "I know I am but summer to your heart, and not the full four seasons of the year." We have, particularly, in regard to the male, condemned him to psychological unemployment--the displaced generation.

Another aspect of the rejection of age, experience, or tradition is the American psyche. The American people have never sunk deep roots in its soil. Today, one out of every five families is always on the move. The American fixes his eyes on the future, he disdains the past. This is a country of which it has been said, "Happy is America that has no history." The New World, as Burke had it, "was called into being to redress the shortcomings of the old." Thus was the United States the "jeunesse dorée"--golden youth, beloved by the Gods, with no discernible Achilles' heels--no Siegfried vulnerability. This is the land preeminently of youth. "An excellent and flattering line of dresses made for middle-aged women is sold under the trade name 'Forever Young.'" This is the land, to quote the advertising rubric, "that thinks young."

In a sense one can understand the great magnetism in regard to youth--the tropism toward our untroubled past. Certainly this was a land which, with the exception of the negro, was largely formed by immigrants. In rejecting Europe, they repudiated the authority of the father, they revolted against the fatherland. Physically, this was a country that needed youth. America's vast acres demanded the strong muscles of youth. This is a country that, with the rare exception of a Benjamin Franklin, found its movers and shapers amongst youth. Mobility, geography, temperament, and history afforded youth a tremendous panorama through which it might fulfill its destiny. This is a people, cradled providentially, by two seas that kept it relatively immune from the imperialistic venture and the dynastic dreams of Europe. For the most part, with the exception of the effort of Maximilian to mount the throne in Mexico, America was able to immunize against the thrust of European imperialism.

America remained free of historical ordeal and agony. The only way in which Americans could express criticism, curiously enough is illustrated by Mark Twain who was a social thinker, is in the guise of humor. This, too, was the way in which

Lincoln, who possessed a tragic sense, could express it--only through humor.

Within recent years the temper of America has grown quite serious. We are becoming conscious of the sense of growing old--we are beginning to recognize "the tragic sense of life." This is what Santayana meant: "the young man who has not wept is a savage." America, within recent years, has learned to weep tears. The searching for national purpose conducted by the New York Times and Life magazine is typical. You can read the somber conclusion of Dr. John W. Gardner, President of the Carnegie Foundation, in his excellent Self Renewal on page 98: "the goal before us constantly recedes." The knowledgeable writing of Lippman and Reston, the conclusion of Stevenson and George Keenan, all of these have punctured our inflated image of invulnerable youth. The Bewildered Age, by Virginia Held, begins with "an apprehension is abroad in the land today that America is ailing and disheartened." One remembers the solemn dictum of Freud, "America is the most grandiose experiment the world has seen, but I am afraid it is not going to be a success." In 1921, Walter Rathenau told Andre Gide that America had no soul and did not have one "because she had not deigned to plunge into the abyss of suffering."

Herbert Gold, a keen student of American life, in The Age of Happy Problems, satirized the America of the happy ending. Some of you remember the words the publisher said to the author: "No, Mr. Gold, I don't think you understand what we want. We want happy stories about happy people with happy problems." Gold, commenting on the works of H. W. Auden, mentions the line Auden rewrote to read: "we must love one another and die." Originally it appeared as "we must love one another or die." "Or die" means there is a possibility of change, a possibility of choice. In later years, Auden rewrote it, looking out upon a world in which nuclear danger threatened all. It was interesting to Gold that nowhere had the sentimental anthropologists taken the grimmer, the more somber, phrase. They still repeat after all these years the phrase of greater grace. But--we must live together and die! This points out the inevitability of death, despite our choice.

An especially perceptive book by Sykes, The Hidden Remnant, maintains that "adversity sharpens experience." He points out, "Some of the most successful statesmen of our times, Lenin, Churchill, DeGaulle, Mao, Nehru, only became so after years out of office. Prison educated some. Disease educated Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was fortune's darling, the handsome, lucky Eden, who made unthinking mistakes at Cyprus and at the Suez. "That is why," he said, (and this was written before the tragic death of our President Kennedy), "fortune's darling, the handsome, lucky Kennedy must learn from the solar plexus what he had been spared by the disaster"--the disaster of the Bay of Pigs. And now America itself must take on a new maturity--the realization of the tragic sense of life. Yes, America has suddenly become much older--"we have put away childish things...."

Sykes had pointed out that adversity, maturity, struggle, defeat, the recognition of that which is beyond our control to a certain degree, all of these are part of the process of aging. These lead to a deepening of the sense of life. Now I think that Americans have come to understand in depth, in the profundity of all its meaning, the loss of our young President.

Americans have come to understand the sombre depths and encysted difficulties in the embattled resistance not only to civil, but to human, rights. Now there has deepened into the American spirit, the appreciation of maturity, of change, of sorrow. Isaiah said, "We all do fade, as the leaf." Yes, "the flower fadeth, the grass withereth, only the word of the Lord stands forever." Only with maturity comes humility, and only with humility comes the understanding of the aged. Only then do we understand "Heaven lies about us in our infancy, shades of the prison house begins to close upon the growing boy." Only out of understanding and humility comes that kind of creative pity, not that which is pathetic, but that which is prophetic. Only then do we come to appreciate the meaning of age.

"As a white candle  
In a holy place,  
So is the beauty  
of an aged face."

I would like to suggest a contrast of our American civilization with other cultures. I find it significant that Robert Browning places in the mouth of Rabbi Ben Ezra, the credo of optimistic age:

"Grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life, for which the  
first was made."

It was natural that both the Chinese and Jewish way of life have survived because of a strong concept of the role of the family. In this background there is a place of honor for the aged. Indeed, the Jewish people were largely led by a group that were known as "The Elders." It is interesting that Dr. Maurice Linden has spoken of a kind of concept known as "Elderhood." He says, "America must restore to her old people a feeling of achievement" for reaching what he called "Elderhood." This stage of life should mean especial status, authority, and dignity. Such a restoration would benefit the young who would then look forward eagerly to their own older years. At present, growing old in the United States is a depressing prospect.

Lin Yutang, that genial interpreter of the culture of China, remarks in his The Importance of Living as follows: "I found no absolute difference between Eastern and Western life, except in the attitude toward age." In China, the first question one person asks another is, "what is your glorious age?" The higher the age, the greater the number of years, the more the enthusiasm grows.

In the Jewish tradition, we are commanded to honor and fear (the same word as revere in Hebrew) our parents. God does not demand that we honor Him. Thus in the book of Leviticus, "ye shall fear every man his mother and his father." In Exodus we are warned, "and ye shall honor thy father and thy mother." What did the rabbis mean by these paradoxical interpretations? The rabbis were men of profound psychological insight and practical experience. They understood that, ordinarily, the child's attitude is to love one's mother and fear one's father. The reasons are obvious. Consequently, in order to balance the relationships of parents and children, they introduced the reversal of the ordinary nature of things.

They demanded that one should honor his father and fear his mother in order to achieve better psychological balance. The wisdom of the rabbis is evident in the disparity between the wide enthusiasm evoked by "Mother's Day" and the relative unimportance of "Father's Day." "Momism", "smother love" are phrases that are frequently heard in discussion. There are no concepts that ascribe the same potent role to fathers.

It is interesting that while the Bible has frequent references to the help extended to the widow, orphan, and needy, nowhere does it make mention to helping the old. Jewish folkways provided that respect for the old be not restricted to one's parents. In Leviticus 19:32: "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God." It is significant that this command to rise before the aged and respect the old is not merely a homiletical hope or a treatise on good manners. This admonition is solidly wedged in the legal and binding aspects of Jewish law. A famous rabbi would rise before an aged heathen peasant saying, "What storms of fortune has this old man weathered in his lifetime?" Proverbs 20:29 phrased it, "The glory of young men is in their strength, and the beauty of old men, in the hoary head." The words of the Psalmist 71:9, "Cast me not away when my strength has failed me," became inscribed upon the tablets of the Jewish heart and enshrined in its most sacred prayers.

The recognition of the role of the aged is an index of the character of a civilization. It is easy to love children. Despite Freud's description of them as "polymorphous perverse," they are beautiful. They are, of course, the hope of mankind as well as an assurance of personal immortality. It is not quite so easy to love old people who are loveless, forlorn, opinionated, and argumentative. It is precisely this fact which is the criterion of our civilization. Not to love those who are easy to love, but to love those who need our love because they are unattractive and unloved and, sometimes, almost unloveable.

This is a brief but consummate confrontation of the differences between the traditional Jewish culture and the larger civilization. Christianity largely bases its charity on the word caritas, translated

as "love." The Jewish concept is t'zdakah which means "charity," also, but is derived from the word signifying justice.

Love is capricious. Frequently we bestow it upon the wrong individuals. There are few phrases more poignant than the plaint of David on the death of his beloved son Absalom. That the latter had plotted against the life and kingdom of his father, that he had acted treacherously, all of these were overlooked in David's great love for his unworthy son. When the news of Absalom's death arrived, David cried out, "Oh! Absalom my son, would that I had died in thy place." Love is frequently imperious, impulsive, conferred as a boon, withdrawn as a penalty. Love may be given as a matter of caprice; justice is a matter of right. It is a dictate. Justice is an impersonal action. It is well-nigh universal. That is why the treatment of the old in the ancient Jewish culture was not conditional upon affection or love. It rested upon the stronger base of law. A world without love would be a prison, but a world without law would be a jungle, a chaos. We will have to import into the life of America the appreciation of the older civilization for the aged. We Americans will have to learn the tragic sense of life, and the inevitability of some aspects of sorrow. Americans will have to realize that the stereotype of constant youth is one that has been outworn.

Americans cherish the Bible. We have much to learn from the Bible. We don't know whether the Biblical manner of counting the years accords with our modern chronology. "Teach me to number my days that I may achieve a heart of wisdom." They were more concerned with making their days count. Certainly the Biblical tradition of valuing the role of the old, of honoring the aged, of understanding the sense of the tragic, this should have for us great significance. Robert Louis Stevenson has said, "As long as we love, we serve...as long as we are loved by others we are indispensable and no man is useless as long as he has a friend."

The difference between the Biblical ideal and the modern age, deals with the manner of viewing age. Abraham is considered blessed "in that he lived to good and rich years." The civilization of Western man, as Oswald Spengler points out in his monumental Decline of The West,

is characterized by the ideal of Faust. He spent his life in the search of eternal youth as well as power. He had to surrender his soul in that moment in which he cried to a changing world, "stay, thou art so fair." One is the religious attitude. The other is pagan. For this essentially is the difference. Religion is concerned with the timeless--the word secular, itself, means time, worldly.

What does the future hold for older people? What does it mean for the aging in a country that is child-centered, youth-centered, everything else but age-centered? We do not have to accept the defeatist, depressing stereotype as the inevitable symbol of old age. We can say with Santayana, "nothing is inherently and convincingly young except spirit, and spirit can enter a human being perhaps better in the quest of old age and dwell there, undisturbed, in the turmoil of adventure."

We can emulate the courage of a Renan, who began the study of Chinese at the age of 90. Gently admonished about beginning the study of a difficult language so late in life, he answered, "I would go on if I knew I were to die tomorrow."

There is the testimony of some 400 great men who testified that one-third of them had achieved their greatest heights after the age of 60 and the surprising 23 percent who testified they had come into the realm of greatness after 70. (Beatty, The Senior Citizen, page 98)

There are some like the famous Sir William Osler, who pointed out the uselessness of men above 60 years of age and the "advantages of a year of peaceful contemplation before a peaceful departure by chloroform." The good doctor remained to live and work until the age of 70, thereby disregarding his own somber advice.

For those of us who are not geniuses, but ordinary people, I think there is much that we can receive and give to others in the waning years of existence.

We can adjust ourselves to the realization that, if we walk a little more haltingly, we can see the landscape and its people more thoroughly. We must understand that, if we speak with more difficulty, we can control our tongue more directly. We can learn to speak slowly the words of condemnation; we can suppress the quick and biting retort. We can impose greater discipline upon the tongue which is an instrument of life and death. We can, with

advancing years, take ourselves above the battle for prestige and power and all of its attendant pressures. We can strive to be islands of serenity in the ocean of conflict. We should recognize that we are really old when we depart from our ideals.

In our later days we should make more time to walk with God. I like

the words of the telescope maker, "I have dwelt too long amidst the stars to be afraid of the darkness." For us, old and young, are the hauntingly relevant words of the prophet Joel, "Your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions."