

Going on Growing:

Later life in the church: developing faith, learning, spirituality and service.

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Older people in the church: Faith, spiritual development and learning.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The aims of this work are:
 - To examine the educational, faith formation and spiritual development needs and contribution of older people in the church
 - To identify current thinking and research in the area of faith formation and spirituality of older people, so that appropriate practice can be encouraged in the church and resources developed.
 - To note particular challenges and opportunities relating to faith formation and spiritual development of older people in the light of current demographic patterns with ageing congregations and longer life expectancy
2. This work responds to the request for an internal report on the learning and spiritual development needs of older people in the church. The work is being undertaken at the request of the Chief Education Officer in the Church of England Education Division, and her opposite number in the Methodist Church.

Range of Existing Work

3. Work in relation to ageing has been done previously by the Church of England, but has not focussed in detail on the issues of faith development and spirituality. In 1990, the former Board of Social Responsibility published a key report, *Ageing*. This was accompanied by a study guide suitable for parish use. The report explored the ageing process, attitudes, faith issues, social policy concerns and the church's response. A final chapter dealt with issues facing the church. Though twenty years have passed since it was written, many of the observations of the report still stand. In 2007 the Mission and Public Affairs Division of the C of E commissioned a scoping paper, *Ageing: Burden or Blessing?* This paper notes key theological issues and makes reference to work that could be done by churches. It recognises the opportunity for further work in area of faith development.
4. In the Methodist Church, the importance of the ageing agenda has been fostered by significant work done by MHA (Methodist Homes for the Aged, now known as the MHA care group). In addition to a range of practical publications from MHA itself, in 2001 the Methodist Church published *Older People and the Church*¹: This is based on an ecumenical research

project co-ordinated by Albert Jewell, then the senior chaplain of MHA. It includes information relevant to this study, including findings on belief and on potential church responses.

5. A number of Christian organisations are concerned with developing good practice in work with older people, and many involved have helpfully shared valuable insights and experience during the research for this project. These are listed in Appendix I. Many of the resources these organisations have produced focus on pastoral needs and appropriate responses. Spiritual care, especially in residential homes, has been a growing area of interest in recent years. Much work addresses the needs of the dependent elderly, sometimes described as the 4th age. On the whole, less attention has as yet been given to issues affecting the active elderly in their 3rd age.
6. The study of human ageing (gerontology) includes work on both physical and psychosocial understandings of the ageing process. Diverse disciplines make contributions to understanding mental and social processes involved in ageing. Academic disciplines involved with studies of ageing include neuroscience, psychology, genetics, social sciences, and educational and developmental studies. In addition to academic studies, there is a growing amount of practice based literature and study from practitioners working with older people. This includes studies from those involved in ministry in church and faith contexts, and well as from professionals involved in health and social care. This project has attempted to extract information specifically related to learning, faith and spiritual development.
7. There is increasing experience and literature on issues related to dementia and cognitive decline in older people, including the spiritual care of those suffering from dementia. While literature and research relating to this includes useful insights, it has been agreed that detailed study of this issue falls beyond the scope of this current project.
8. While there is a growing UK literature on issues related to ageing, there is a longer history of academic literature on the subject from the USA and studies are now also emerging from Australia. Some of the most frequently cited texts from these countries have been drawn on, though extensive investigation of detailed empirical research is beyond the scope of this study. In addition, many transatlantic churches have been developing extensive 'older adult ministries', which offer interesting questions and challenges. However the very different social and religious context means that practices followed and lessons learned are not necessarily directly transferable.

B. THE CURRENT AGEING AGENDA

9. The present and predicted future changes in the demographic profile of the UK population is documented widely. The majority of those living in this country can now expect to live far longer than would have been the case in the past. As population patterns change, so too does the need to re-envisage and re-describe it. 'Old age' may once have been thought of as the period following normal retirement age, but with an extended life span this is no longer so. Many writings and documents distinguish between a "3rd Age" and an older "4th Age". Elsewhere the terms 'deep old age' or 'dependant elderly' have been used to describe this later stage of life, while those in their 60s (and often their 70s too) are described as "the active elderly", "active seniors" or even "those in the new middle age" (the term 'middle age' itself changes as the statistical mid-point moves). While those involved with social policy frequently need to attach chronological ages to some ageing constructs for planning purposes, for the purposes of this study it has not been necessary to do so.
10. Changing population patterns result in numerous social policy implications, as well as challenges and opportunities for individuals and groups in society. A wide range of insights relating to the ageing population are now being brought together by UK Government EU funded programmes². The awareness of future implications of demographic trends is resulting in considerable investment in cross disciplinary programmes³. Concern to minimize pressures on the care services and so promote independent living has led to interest in and research on wellbeing, and what is sometimes referred to as 'active ageing' or 'successful ageing'. While there are clear social policy dimensions of these studies, they sometimes include information relating to the value of learning activity.
11. There are increasing indications that implications of the ageing population are beginning to be more widely recognised in varied contexts in society in general. For example, the Guardian Newspaper now has an internet page bringing together comment and insight on older people.⁴ During spring 2011, BUPA have been advertising their care homes as active communities where residents pursue their interests, under the slogan "Helping you Find Healthy". In May 2010 a report in the Consumer Association publication 'Which?', commented: "*The over-50s control around 90% of the money currently held in UK personal savings accounts and that figures is only going to increase over the next 10 years. ... consumer brands...should be falling over themselves to meet the needs of the country's wealthiest citizens*".
12. With growing recognition of positive opportunities for the ageing population, there might begin to be a shift in some of the common negative stereotypes of old people that are widely held. In her book *Borrowing from the Future*⁵, Ann Morisy notes that currently, the perception of older

people is frequently one of low value. She sees that there is a propensity for wider society to absorb the negativity projected.

Paradigms of Ageing

13. Approaches to ageing in society and the literature have been described in an article by Harriet Mowat⁶ as falling into different discourses or paradigms. One is a problem based discourse, that sees ageing primarily as a difficulty. At a personal level ageing is something to be feared and rejected. As a societal level there are obvious social, financial and policy challenges, that are problems to be solved.
14. The second discourse is that of age as an opportunity to be welcomed. It can be seen as bringing individuals calm, wisdom and releases energy. Writing on 'successful ageing' could perhaps be seen as relating to this paradigm. Mowat comments that this discourse may arise partly as a result of the aspirations and hopes of the writers and others now approaching old age.
15. Mowat also suggests a third discourse that sees age as a journey, and describes this process as realistic. She writes: "*The underpinning assumption is that ageing is inevitable, as is death and that there is loss and pain in the process of growing older (Kimble 2002). The perception of ageing is rooted in its purpose as a vehicle for spiritual journey. Ageing is an important part of the spiritual journey and offers opportunity for growth and discovery of self through suffering and loss which can be helped by attention to the creative self.*"

Theological paradigms

16. There are several theological approaches to viewing old age. One is to explore Biblical references. Here there is recognition and acceptance of old age as a part of God's created order. In addition, biblical narratives of individual people who lived to old age offer models: long life (and therefore old age) is sometimes described as a blessing. Biblical references and reflections on old age and the experience of older people are included in the 1990 Church of England report on Ageing, in the 1998 Roman Catholic document on the Dignity of Older People from the Pontifical Council for the Laity⁷, and are extensively explored in Rob Merchant's book *Pioneering the Third Age*.⁸
17. Other writings including theological perspectives on old age include those that reflect theologically on issues associated with ageing. The Christian Council on Ageing has produced reflections such as George Appleton's

'*Light of Faith*', reflecting on ways in which God may be present in areas of experience such as pain, depression or memory. The journal *Practical Theology* offers theological reflection on the practices of the church in many areas. James Woodward's book *Valuing Age* includes what can be described as pastoral and practical theology, often using narrative stories of the experience of older individuals as a starting point for offering some theological reflection which relates experiences to the Christian faith tradition. John Swinton writes about what it might mean to live lives shaped by a "hopeful narrative of death"⁹.

18. Another approach offering a theological underpinning of work on age recognises key theological principles and perspectives. The value of all God's people, whatever age, is of prime importance here. The Church of England Board of Education's 2010 report *Going for Growth* looks at the transformation of children and young people, and articulates three key theological principles which apply to old people as much as younger ones. These are:

- The absolute value of each person, as all are made in the image of God
- The importance of relationship, as all are called to be in relationship with God, each other and with the created order.
- The calling of all to be citizens of the kingdom of God on earth

Ageing in the Church

19. It is widely recognised that church congregations tend to have a higher age profile than the wider public, though national statistics relating to this have not been regularly collected from either the Methodist Church or the Church of England. In the Church of England, the average age of congregations was 61 in 2007¹⁰.
20. The Church Life Survey (2001) collected figures from 108,000 church attenders across a wide range of denominations, including the C of E (44,000 respondents) and Methodists (29,000 respondents). The picture these figures offer is now ten years out of date, but continues to be of interest since, unlike other statistical information, it was collected on the same basis from both churches. Elsewhere, the differing understandings of membership in the two churches can make for lack of comparability in any figures that have been collected.
21. An attached graph (see appendix 3) is based on the 2001 Church Life Survey. It indicates that people then attending the churches surveyed then had a considerably higher age profile than the wider public, and the profile for those attending Church of England and Methodist churches was higher still. It is noticeable that attendance for both C of E and Methodist churches peaked in the age group 65 - 74. Compared to the national population and to churchgoers of other denominations, there was then a

low proportion of C of E attenders in all groups aged below 45, and a low proportion of Methodists in all groups below 55.

22. The 2001 publication *Older People and the Church* included comparative maps based on information collected by the English Church Census of 1989 and the English Church Attendance Survey of 1998. These illustrate the percentage of those aged 65 or over attending Sunday worship in each English county. During these 10 years there had been a fall off in all geographical areas of the likelihood of older people attending church.¹¹
23. Almost the only comparable age related statistics regularly available from both the Church of England and the Methodist Churches are those detailing the age of candidates for authorised ministries. In both churches there has been a marked increase in the number and proportion of older candidates, including many over the age of 50 or 60. This issue is explored further in paragraphs 96ff.

Responses and Challenges in the Church

24. Churches repeatedly affirm the value of growing faith as an ongoing activity. One prayer in the Church of England Baptism liturgy reminds us that “*In baptism God invites you on a life-long journey*”, and a confirmation prayer asks that people may “*daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more.*” Yet despite this and the church’s commitment to the whole people of God, older people sometimes feel they are no longer taken seriously in their congregations. In some churches, a lot of energy may be invested into programmes to encourage faith development in younger people, but far fewer opportunities offered to older people.
25. Older people can sometimes feel sidelined and unwanted in the church. Widespread discussion of some challenges facing churches includes recognition of declining numbers involved in the church institutions, discussion of the rising age of congregations, and some concern expressed at the high age profile of those coming forward for authorized ministries. The re-emergence of Mission and ‘outward facing’ agendas in the church can result in a tension between catering for current members and looking to future, with existing older members of the church feeling they are not a priority.
26. The need to respond positively to ageing agendas in the church is being increasingly recognised. Among many examples, recent development have included one-off CMD sessions for clergy and others on the ageing issue, including some offered by MHA. The Methodist-run Cliff College has designed a validated study course relating to ministry with older people, A C of E diocesan newspaper produced a major feature article on the topic of older age. The Bishop of Stockport had a very large response

to an article on the subject he posted on a diocesan website following conversations with older people who felt sidelined by the apparent obsession of current culture with youth, and developed ideas into a book *The Contented Life: spirituality and the gift of years*.¹²

27. Despite such developments and interest, much of the work that has been done has remained as theoretical vision, rather than becoming widely followed practice. There is a noticeable and widespread lack of awareness of existing publications, suggestions and guidelines. The 1990 Church of England *Ageing* report ends with a summary chapter including a list of opportunities for the church. This report was also accompanied by a guide for parishes titled *Happy Birthday Anyway!*, which included particular points to invite action planning. The 2001 Methodist publication *Older People and the Church* ends with a list of “40 Questions and suggestions for churches”. Each chapter of MHA’s 2009 publication *Crying in the Wilderness* concludes with a boxed section titled “Pastoral Action Strategy”, with relevant questions and issues for churches to consider. The handbook produced by the Leveson centre and Church Army, titled (possibly misleadingly) *A Mission Shaped Church for Older People* includes helpful practical suggestions for churches. So do James Woodward’s own books *Valuing Age* and *Befriending Death*, and Rob Merchant’s *Pioneering the Third Age*. Added to these, a wide selection of interesting and often practical publications has been produced by some of the organisations listed in appendix I. Yet it seems that few church congregations have engaged with these agendas.
28. In some churches where energy has been invested in concern for older people, pastoral care is frequently the primary agenda. Older people are sometimes viewed as the object of concern by others, which can be related to a common paternalistic ‘strength to weakness’ view of ministry. Alongside the church’s long record of pastoral care, the church has put less energy into ministry among older people that promotes ongoing formation. A phrase frequently used is “ministry to older people”, rather than “ministry with older people”.
29. As awareness of the ageing population becomes more widespread, many in the church recognise that ‘something more should be done’ to address issues that are increasingly arising with the shift in population patterns. Key challenges are:
 - To ensure that that current overt priorities and agenda of the church take full account of older people and that any actions initiated are not based on false or past assumptions of what will be helpful or ‘good for’ older people.
 - To ensure ‘long term’ Christians are offered appropriate spiritual and learning opportunities, appropriate for their patterns of faith development, spirituality and later stage of life.

- To find ways for the church to enable and resource the growing '3rd age' cohort for active involvement in the church and the world, encouraging and enabling positive roles to develop within the church for older people while recognising the changes that may occur with changing patterns of retirement from other employment.

C. LEARNING AND SPIRITUALITY: EXISTING LITERATURE

Learning and Age - general

30. 'Lifelong learning' is now a familiar phrase. The term itself challenges the assumption that learning is for the young, a view still held partly unconsciously by some. It may still be widely assumed in some discussion that learning is about compulsory education and preparation for adult employment and life. A rapidly changing world has resulted in adults needing to continue to learn to adapt to changing technologies and job markets. But the term 'lifelong' does literally mean 'cradle to grave', and so includes the ageing members of the population. Current policy writings and research constantly affirms the belief that, for older people, "Learning is Good for you". Learning activity encourages "wellbeing", both enabling individuals to remain healthy and to retain active connections with community.
31. A wide range of secular publications approach the value of learning for older people. These arise out of a range of different perspectives and practical concerns, including:
- Challenging the initial education paradigm - e.g. *Learning through Life*, a NIACE 2008 inquiry into the future of lifelong learning, which notes that our education and training system has grown up around the notion that learning precedes practice, and that our existing UK learning provision does not respond adequately to either an ageing society or to changing patterns of paid and unpaid activity. It suggests looking at the structure of publicly funded learning provision on a four-stage model, with the third stage those aged 50-75 and the fourth stage 75+.
 - Neurobiology.¹³ Technological advances have made it possible to monitor the brain plasticity and to track growth and contraction of specific areas of the brain when different mental activities are undertaken. The brain does indeed grow as learning takes place, and there is truth in the adage "use it or lose it".
 - "Active Ageing" - e.g. the work of the Third Age Trust / U3A. One key aspect of U3A is encouraging a creative approach to the post-retirement chapter of life. Initially established in France in 1972, the UK model has developed on a 'self help' basis, with participants involved both as teachers and learners.
 - Participation in learning activity - e.g. EUBIA (EU Broadening People's Minds in Ageing), which looks at barriers and obstacles and aiming to network good practice.¹⁴ Older people's own motivation for learning, and its subjective as well as objective value, is discussed in publications such as *Learning Participation and choice: A guide for facilitating older learners*¹⁵

- Approaches to learning with older people and appropriate facilitation. e.g. Publications encouraging reminiscence work, LARA publications and the document *Learning Participation and choice* mentioned above.
- Tasks to be learned / curriculum for learning - e.g. LARA ¹⁶(Learning: A Response to Ageing - a European Commission project). This suggests practical “literacies for ageing well” - financial, technological, emotional, health and ‘civic and community’.
- Learning in specific contexts - e.g. learning in residential care homes. NIACE project sponsored by the transformation fund. ¹⁷
- Mental development and wellbeing - e.g. The Government Office for Science’s Foresight Mental Capacity and Wellbeing Project aimed to look at how to achieve the best possible mental development and wellbeing for everyone in the UK in the future, and in relation to the older population in this society suggests that “the mental capital of older people is seriously undervalued” and that education could have benefits “by increasing an individual’s sense of self esteem, encouraging social interaction and activity”¹⁸.

Adult Learning Theory

32. Adult learning literature offers many insights that are relevant to work with older people. Writers on adult learning (sometimes described as andragogy as opposed to pedagogy) have long recognised specific characteristics which especially distinguish work with adults. Malcolm Knowles’ list of characteristics of adult learners have been much refined and adapted by many others. Some key ingredients often seen as especially significant in adult learning include:

- **Experience is important.** Any adults who are involved in learning activities bring with them a range of existing experiences. Good adult learning is not simply about absorbing new information, but about enabling insight to develop ‘from the crucible of experience’, integrating new perspectives and ‘making meaning’ Learning takes place by integrating new ideas, perspectives and material with what is already known. Older learners will inevitably have a wider range of experiences to draw on than younger learners.
- **Learners have within them the potential to grow.** The work of Paulo Friere is widely quoted in educational literature, though does not frequently get mentioned in the literature on ageing. Some practitioners working with older people have said that Friere’s work has been significant for them, reminding them that people have the resources to grow and learn within themselves and their current environment.

- **Adult learning is often undertaken on a “need to know” basis.** Many current 3rd and 4th agers were themselves educated at a time when didactic teaching imparting information was the norm. As a result members of this group may readily accept training sessions of this nature. But much greater opportunity could exist for offering material that enables exploration of key challenges. Some suggestions on issues that could helpfully be engaged with by older people have been made in both faith based and secular contexts. An EU funded programme (LARA: Learning - A Response to Ageing) identifies specific areas or “literacies for ageing”, while other practical literature suggests likely life events and challenges that could be usefully addressed by informal learning
- **The Learning process must be active and not passive.** It can be developed and reinforced by undertaking intentional carefully designed activities and exercises designed to promote engagement with a topic, issue or material. Jane Vella has described these as ‘learning tasks’.

33. A key aspect of learning is related to reflection and the recognition and making of meaning. Another aspect of adult education theory with considerable significance for older people is the work around meaning making. Writers, notably Jennifer Moon, draw attention to ways in which it is possible to structure learning contexts in order to encourage the development of deeper understanding and meaning.¹⁹ Moon clarifies the distinction between “surface learning” involving noticing and beginning to make sense of that, and “deep learning”, which involves making connections in order to “Make Meaning” and work with that. Older people are at a stage of life where such reflection related to past experience can enable significant integration. Various local events and sessions including older people and learning opportunities have been observed during the course of this project: these vary very considerably in the extent to which individuals’ experiences have been given an opportunity to surface or be used as material for reflection.

34. Learning is related to human development. Studies focussing on developmental theories are relevant, especially those that pay particular attention to the second half of life. While some developmental theorists focus particularly on development in the earlier years of life, Jung and others developed models that describe changes right across the life span. Though Jung’s own detailed studies majored on earlier life stages, he wrote in 1960; “*Thoroughly unprepared we take the step into the afternoon of life....with the false assumption that our truths and our ideals will serve us hitherto. But we cannot live the afternoon of life according to the programme of life’s morning...For the ageing person it is a duty and a necessity to devote serious attention to himself.*”²⁰ Jungian theory observes a process of maturation and individuation across the second half of life. The implications of this for personal spiritual and faith development is looked at below at paragraphs 66ff.

35. Some have suggested that many older people do not want to learn or to change in any way. An “increasing persistence hypothesis” proposes that

people become gradually more resistant to change throughout life, but some research has not found this to be the case²¹. Madeline Light suggests that the reluctance to change can be more related to the need not to let go of things that have provided part of a person's identity. She suggests that a challenge when working with older people is *"to create an environment in which friendship groups form, identities are affirmed and opportunities for new knowledge are generated, while at the same time challenging people to be open to change not as a threat but as a legitimate and necessary sign of life."*²²

Spirituality and Age - general

36. 'Spirituality' was described by Evelyn Underhill as an "elastic term", and there is no doubt that the elastic has stretched a lot further in recent years! Increasingly it has become adopted in secular literature with a much less specific focus than the way it has traditionally been used in some churches. . For example, much of the growing literature related to residential care homes uses 'spirituality' as a wider term that can encompass almost any areas of emotional wellbeing, as distinct from material or physical wellbeing, or areas that can be medically treated. Albert Jewell writes: *"spirituality has to do with those intangibles that are nonetheless of vital importance to most human beings: values, relationships, and the discovery of meaning and purpose in life. Whether or not they regard themselves as 'religious' in the sense of being identified with a particular religious tradition, denomination or group, most reflective persons recognise that they are spiritual beings whose fulfilment lies beyond the merely material and physical."*²³
37. In the minds of some people, the terms spirituality, religion and faith have been thought of as synonymous, but this is no longer widely seen to be the case. It has been suggested that in this country at the present time, the word spirituality has more positive connotations than the word religion, which seems to carry negative connotations for some people and be associated with restrictive moral codes and institutional structures. Rob Merchant suggests that while religion describes the corporate fellowship or institution, the individualization of society has led to an understanding of spirituality *"defined by the individual who may pick and choose the expression of his or her 'spirituality' according to personal preference."*²⁴
38. Academic and practice-based papers define spirituality in a wide variety of ways. In general the term 'religion' is used to describe an organised system of beliefs and practices, while spirituality is more individual. A paper from (the former) Age Concern on Spirituality and Ageing suggests that as secular charities they need not be concerned with explanations about the meaning of life in general terms *"It is not our job. What we must do however, is make it possible for older people to look at the meaning in their own lives"*²⁵ Another description of the distinction between religion and spirituality is that *"Spirituality is seen by the majority of people to be a broader term than religious*

*and to refer to an inside-out personal learning process rather than an outside-in socialisation process”.*²⁶

39. Despite this wider understanding of spirituality, there is not a clear dividing line between secular and faith based literature on spirituality. Significant writers quoted widely in the academic literature include those with firm roots in the Christian tradition, notably Albert Jewell (Methodist minister and previously Pastoral Director of MHA), Elizabeth MacKinlay (Australian Anglican priest with a nursing background) and James Woodward (Anglican priest). Some, but by no means all, of their writings are designed to be read by those from outside the churches as well as those within: further reference is made to these writings below alongside other faith-based perspectives.
40. Again, there is not a clear dividing line between spirituality and other theoretical disciplines. A recent paper by Joanna Walker²⁷ aims to map spirituality and ageing, exploring the interplay between gerontology, spirituality and lifelong learning, and identifies the themes and conceptual frameworks that are being used across these areas. The three concepts she identifies are:
- Successful ageing - both the maintenance of intellectual functions and active engagement in activity / relationships.
 - Continuity theory, which sees the development of individuals as continuous throughout their lives, rather than disengaging in older age (as was suggested by the earlier controversial disengagement theory).
 - The metaphor of ‘the journey’, with an intentional search for meaning, purpose, development of wisdom and acceptance of the totality of life.
41. There is much for the church to welcome in the growing awareness of spirituality. Residential homes are increasingly welcoming ‘chaplaincy’ and local church involvement, and are developing worship opportunities and spiritual care plans. However there are caveats. David Jenkins, former Bishop of Durham, notes that spirituality is sometimes seen as “*something to be indulged in according to personal and individual taste*”. He also observed some appear to be interested in spirituality simply as a useful therapeutic tool with older people, without awareness of the significance of commitment, and with “*no concern for engagement in life and death from beginning to end, or the extent to which religious certainties can either open people up to wider realities or close them down.*”²⁸

Literature based on faith based and church contexts

42. Some church based research focuses on religious practice rather than more internal spiritual / belief processes. This is obviously easier to identify and measure, but is not necessarily related to a person’s spirituality, learning or faith development. Some studies indicate that church attendance is linked to wellbeing, but this raises questions of whether it is the spiritual dimensions

that contribute to health, or whether the benefits result from being part of a social network. In a report on spirituality and older people' written for the Centre for Policy on Ageing in 1999²⁹, Howse notes that some empirical studies may research into the *prominence* of religion in the lives of older people or the *benefits* of religion. But this does not necessarily tell us anything about the phenomenon of human ageing itself. Nor does it relate to learning and development processes, though again some research suggests that learning is important to some older people.

43. There is not much research offering empirical evidence relating to faith and spiritual development that compares variations across the range of different age groups. As yet there is a relatively small amount of work, especially in the UK, which involves longitudinal studies looking at how individuals change across their life-span. Empirical studies that have been undertaken frequently focus on small samples and specific groups. Any conclusions from studies relating to the spirituality or learning of older people in specific contexts may relate to cultural factors affecting the generational cohort studied rather than the outcomes and effects of ageing. An increasing number of research papers now involve cross-cutting studies, recognizing the significance of additional variables (e.g. gender / social class) in addition to just age.
44. In the UK, the large-scale 2001 Church Life survey did not ask many questions related to the area of spirituality and faith development. However responses are interesting where they are correlated to age. Church goers completing the survey were asked whether or not they felt they had grown in faith over the previous year. The figures for ongoing growth in faith from Anglican respondents aged 80 and over were no smaller than for adults in other age groups: 29% said they had grown in faith a lot, and 50% noted 'some growth'. Figures such as this challenge some stereotypes, which can assume older people don't want to change or learn anything new.
45. Some studies have uncovered information related to spiritual practice or prayer. These may indicate changing attitudes and patterns in society, rather than processes related to ageing. For example Peter Coleman undertook a study of older people over 20 years in Southampton, and discovered that a high proportion of individuals said that Christian belief and the church had become less important over time.³⁰ He has quoted a UK Saga survey of 15,500 respondents which showed that the majority of older people say they pray or worship less than they used to and one in five said that their religious beliefs were weaker now than earlier in adult life. This could be a response to changing social expectations, rather than changing patterns of spiritual development.
46. Writings on older people in the church are increasingly emerging from ministers and others in the church who have some experience and interest in this area of ministry. Rob Merchant's *Pioneering the Third Age* looks at ageing in the changing social context of the UK, and notes the new challenges. Ian Knox's book *Older People and the Church*³¹ is based on research undertaken across denominations in the West Midlands, and includes sociological comments around issues such as ageism and theological perspectives but

does not specifically focus on learning issues. Other research writings tend to be shorter papers, but some include perspectives and comment relating to learning or spirituality. For example, Madeline Light has looked at factors that have encouraged learning on a Senior Alpha course³² (see also paragraph 112).

47. Many church groups in the USA have developed considerable experience of working with older people, and are producing many writings including practical advice relating to a variety of ministries among older people. A few references have been made to some of this material, especially where it relates to specific questions where other literature has not been available. However the different social and church contexts mean that not all experiences are directly transferable. Recent extensive research by the Willow Creek organisation (initially undertaken in US, but subsequently being developed to check international application) discovered that “age does not appear to have a significant impact on spiritual growth”. Their work surveyed a wide range of denominations (though not Roman Catholics), and did not find any significant differences between the patterns of the churches surveyed. However their only published information on this refers to people between the ages of 19 and 60, rather than detailing older age groups.³³

Learning, spirituality and Age - specific faith perspectives

48. It is in some ways artificial to separate the writings on ‘learning faith’ and on developing ‘spirituality’ in faith-based contexts, especially given increasingly inclusive definitions of spirituality. Elizabeth MacKinlay writes “*the way Fowler has defined ‘faith’ is similar to the way I have defined spirituality*”.³⁴
49. Some similarities between faith development and spirituality can be found at a practical as well as at a theoretical level. Classic processes of spiritual direction familiar in some church traditions do make use of what has later been defined as good adult education practice. They take an individual’s experience as a starting point, invite reflection, and suggest further ‘learning tasks’ or spiritual exercises in order to develop understanding and awareness. This would then offer a resource for further reflection, working through a process Kolb much later described as a learning cycle. Telling of story and reflection on experience are classic adult education exercises and spiritual tasks, frequently now encouraged in a growing number of church traditions where there is interest in the spiritual journey. Several themes emerge from the literature.
50. ***It is important to view learners as ‘Subject’ not ‘Object’.*** Issues relating to the independence of older learners were repeatedly mentioned by older people who I met while undertaking this study: again and again I was told that they, as older people, did not want the church to offer more stuff that was “patronizing”. Some expanded on this, saying that some activities or ‘learning opportunities’ offered were based on negative stereotypes of older people.

The Church of England's 1990 report *Ageing*³⁵ includes a section on 'Ageism' which challenges such images and prejudice also comments on older people expressing regret at attitudes that see them as no longer able to contribute to the church. It mentions the value of older learners setting their own learning goals.

51. ***It is important to recognise older people as active participants, not just 'recipients' of learning activities or spiritual care.*** In Hawley and Jewell's book *Crying in the Wilderness: Giving voice to older people in the church*, the perspectives of older people are clearly seen as the starting point, with chapter headings including 'We have a story', 'We have Questions', 'We need a purpose', and 'We have a ministry'. It is important for the church to recognise older people not simply as 'objects' of care and ministry: they are learners, not just recipients of teaching or spiritual care.
52. ***It is important for learning to take account of the existing experiences of older people themselves.*** In *Valuing Age*, James Woodward quotes an elderly man talking about the church saying : "*I would like the church to answer MY questions rather than THEIR questions. I believe that some older people do become more questioning and reflective, and learning for me should be about discovering and rediscovering meaning and purpose on our journey. I should like to share some of these discoveries with others*".³⁶
53. ***It is important to integrate learning with existing experience.*** Ann Morisy relates this to approaches to adult education, as well as to older people. She writes: "*Whilst knowledge is assumed to exist 'out there', and to exist independently of 'the knower' then the task of the learner is to assimilate it as accurately and efficiently as possible. A new and wider repertoire becomes available to the adult educator when knowledge is treated as specific to its context. The primary task of the adult educator then becomes that of enabling the student, whether over 70 or not, to maximize his or her ability to interpret their own context.*"³⁷

Spiritual characteristics and learning needs of ageing

54. Current government writings tend to define learning needs of older people in pragmatic terms, aiming to maintain people in a position to live independently. These can contrast with the concepts of religious writers, who have a greater concept of a journey through life. Old age is accepted, and has a distinctive function and task. The distinctiveness can be described in varied ways: the three listed below look at (a) needs that should ideally be provided for in the environment, (b) descriptive characteristics that distinguish old age from other groups, and (c) specific tasks an individual may undertake in old age.
55. Methodist Homes for the Aged have defined these in terms of NEEDS of their residents, though these may apply to people of any age.

- The need to sustain HOPE
- The need to give and receive LOVE
- The need for something or someone to believe in - FAITH / TRUST
- The need for CREATIVITY
- The need for (at least a reasonable degree of) PEACE

56. Some writers have approached the task of defining the learning needs of old age by looking at distinctive CHARACTERISTICS that occur at a later stage of life. A publication from the Christian Council on Ageing describes these as:

- Possessions matter little compared to relationships
- As we focus on relationships, we become more tolerant of others' views
- Begin to appreciate wonders of creation
- Process of individuation, finding peace within themselves (Freud - listen to inner selves)
- Sensual experiences / sex less important ³⁸

57. Elizabeth MacKinlay developed a model of the SPIRITUAL TASKS OF AGEING following a period of research conducting in-depth interviews with older people living independently, in order to identify themes they saw as important and relevant to their lives. Later research by MacKinlay noted that the same spiritual tasks were identified from analysis of the data from frail older people as from those living independently. These tasks are:

- To find ultimate meaning (for themselves :e.g. dealing with guilt, ensuing relationships with others are reconciled, reconciliation with God for some)
- To find ways to respond to this meaning (this includes developing 'spiritual strategies', possibly prayer / worship / forgiveness / other spiritual approaches)
- To search for transcendence. This could be defined as arising above self-centredness to a higher view, including concern for other people and wider issues.
- To find meaning and wisdom in later life (life review, finding meaning in growing older, approaching death)
- To develop relationship, and search for intimacy with God and/or others in the face of loss of long-term relationships.
- To search for Hope, especially in the face of fear of the future.

58. The importance of establishing reconciliation and finding peace is reinforced by others. In *Spirituality of Old Age* ³⁹, Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh stresses the importance of reconciliation and making peace "*with everything that has been in your life, with your own conscience, with everyone around you, everyone you have ever encountered, all the circumstances of your life, all your words and deeds, and with God.*"

Reflection / prayer

59. There is a widely held view that there is a possible increased facility in older people for prayer and a spiritual dimension. James Woodward frequently reiterates that older people are the church's "natural spiritual constituency"⁴⁰ There is a small amount of empirical evidence that suggests this, including work from Peter Coleman in the UK, though there are few longitudinal studies at present. On the other hand Rob merchant sees the view that older people inevitably become more spiritual as they age as a "gross myth"⁴¹, which can lead to the spiritual needs of elderly people being overlooked.
60. Findings are hard to interpret conclusively. Given the change in formative culture that will have shaped the habits of different generational cohorts, studies based on cross-sectional data do not necessarily indicate that differences have anything to do with age per se. Opportunity and available time are also factors that influence activity patterns. Research related to faith development and changes in patterns of spirituality through the life course can note effects which may be the result of multiple factors. The rapidly changing nature of social attitudes to religion contributes to the difficulty of isolating which of many factors are most related to observed changes.
61. The 2001 Halley-Stewart age awareness research project⁴² survey found that older people do pray, including those who are not churchgoers. Asked how often they prayed (and given options which included 'hardly ever' and 'only in church'), 85% of church goers and 65% of non churchgoers said they prayed daily. In research contemporary with this, a 1998 British Attitude Survey reported by Barley⁴³ found that 66% of all adults pray, with a quarter praying every month and quarter every week. These figures do indicate a higher level of prayer activity in older people than in the general population, though there is no longitudinal study to help confirm this as a trend.
62. *Older People and the Church* suggests that as people age perceptions of God and of prayer may change, with God becoming more of a presence than a person and prayer a matter of contemplation rather than petition.⁴⁴ Eugene Bianchi notes that in older people images of God or the divine changed over the years. *"In general, these divine images moved from those of a severe or at least sober father figure with fixed regulations and sanctions mediated through religious institutions to a compassionate entity or spirit that is increasingly shrouded in mystery."*⁴⁵
63. Robert Atchley quotes several US longitudinal studies that he says indicate that spirituality (widely defined) increases in importance as people age. He concludes that *"years of experience on a spiritual journey usually improves a person's capacity to experience the spiritual qualities of a large array of experiences, so the spiritual consciousness of individuals has a tendency to expand as they age. This occurs even in people who are not aware of being on a spiritual journey"*⁴⁶

64. The increased life span and the development of a more individualized society may also be affecting awareness of the 'second half of life'. A growing number of more practical books on prayer and spirituality have emerged over the last 30 years. Among these are several that recognise the spiritual significance of various life events and the journey through life. For example, the term "midlife spirituality" is used by Joyce Rupp⁴⁷, who recognises a move towards interiority, re-evaluation and reflection on experiences and losses. Books such as this do not specifically refer to Jungian theory or Erikson's descriptions of the tasks of the second half of life, but the awareness of the distinction is mirrored.
65. Among contemporary writers, Richard Rohr stresses the significance of the potential for a "further journey" of the second half of life and describes the possibility of a spirituality of the second half of life in which the experiences and difficulties of the first half of life can be stepping stones to spiritual development in later life.⁴⁸ He acknowledges that not everyone will undertake this journey, but sees it as especially important for people of faith who are seeking a deeper relationship with God and who have already amassed valuable experiences. He says that *"You can recognize a second half of life person is by a kind of inner outpouring, a kind of inner generativity. They're not guarded. They're not overly self-protected. They're looking for ways to give themselves away, because they're now living out of their abundance, and they find that it's an overflowing wealth"*⁴⁹

Developmental patterns and faith

66. Learning is related to human development, and some studies related to development pay particular attention to the second half of life. While some developmental theorists focus on development in the earlier years. Jung and others developed models that describe changes right across the life span. Jung's own detailed studies majored on earlier stages, though towards the end of his career he wrote: *"Thoroughly unprepared we take the step into the afternoon of life...with the false assumption that our truths and our ideals will serve us hitherto. But we cannot live the afternoon of life according to the programme of life's morning... For the ageing person it is a duty and a necessity to devote serious attention to himself."*⁵⁰ Jungian theory observes a process of maturation and individuation in later years.
67. There is a long history of attempts to describe spiritual development and growth in terms of a succession of identifiable stages. For example, in the 16th century Teresa of Avila wrote of stages of growth metaphorically as a series of room in an 'interior castle', starting with entering the 'gate of conversion', and continuing in stages of increasing intimacy with God and Christ the heavenly bridegroom. John of the Cross, and many later writers including Evelyn Underhill, have used the paradigm of a 'journey' as a backdrop to a series of stages of spiritual progression. This journey will not

be completed by all, but which might be halted at any stage. More recent writers who describe various different spiritual characteristics as 'stages' include Hagberg and Guelich, and Brian McClaren. Richard Rohr describes a clear distinction between the faith and spiritual development possibilities of the first and second half of life.⁵¹

68. Many of these models are descriptive. Any model offers a simplified representation of reality in order to demonstrate certain of its characteristics. As such, these developmental models are not necessarily in competition with each other, as they may be focussing on different aspects of personal faith and spirituality. The descriptions they offer may also relate to particular cultural contexts where they have been observed.
69. In the last half century, there have been more attempts to investigate the significance of some of the concepts identified by stage models, and social and psychological researchers have undertaken surveys and some quantitative measuring of results. Arising out of a Jungian approach, Erik Erikson's influential writings looked at the life course in relation to stages of individual development, and the significance of religious meaning at different stages. Erikson includes a much greater emphasis than in Jung's work on the second half of, including late adult or old age. His model identifies eight stages of life, with the last stage being one where there is emphasis on the task of integration. It has been suggested that for this stage questioning is essential to developing integrity and integration, accepting the past without bitterness and also recognising the place of one's own death.
70. Some developmental writings, including James Fowler's much-quoted model of faith development, give a prominent place to psychological understandings of an individual. Significant is the process of 'individuation' that may occur later in life when people can become more themselves and resolve earlier internal conflicts such as losses and bereavements, and tensions can emerge between integrity and despair. In his original 1981 publication, Fowler suggested a model of "stages of faith" related to chronological age. Subsequent commentators and Fowler himself have since recognised that a rigidly linear progression model does not always operate, and changes are not necessarily related to increasing years, though McClaren has suggested that the pre-adolescent mind is not typically likely to be able to engage in some of the more complex reflective practices associated with the later stages of some models. With the exception of James Fowler, models of spiritual and faith development have not attempted to formally relate stages to specific age groups.
71. Empirical research offers interesting insights, but is not necessarily conclusive. Research on the Myers-Briggs personality inventory shows that people tend to develop their less preferred 'shadow' traits later in their life. Another study⁵² focussed on faith development with a sample of 150 older people, using a questionnaire designed on the basis of Fowler's specific stages of faith. Findings indicated that almost all were firmly 'stage 3' (Synthetic Conventional' or conforming faith). Only one had moved to 'stage 4' (Conjunctive faith - balanced or 'both-and faith'). It was noted that

this person was a scientist with a university education. This could raise an additional question about Fowler's model, and the extent to which it views faith through a western intellectual lens. The findings may also reflect some of the expectations of religious faith encouraged in that generational cohort or social group.

72. More scientific studies have encouraged some people to think that 'stages of growth' are universal facts that have an objective existence. Useful cautions against the misuse of such models are noted by Michael Jacobs⁵³, who points out that models describe developmental aspects and not persons as such - and nor are they "commands to be somewhere different". Developmental theories offer observations and descriptions of characteristics frequently to be found, but they are not definitive.
73. The linear model of faith development has also been critiqued. (e.g. Westerhoff, McClaren) have used the 'tree trunk' analogy to suggest how later stages embrace and include earlier stages of the journey. Other talk about 'spirals', with repeated revisiting of concepts. Writings encompass insights from descriptive and analytic roots. John Westerhoff offered a descriptive pattern of different "styles of faith" in 1976⁵⁴, acknowledging a debt to conversations with James Fowler, whose research had not at that point been published.
74. Despite the limitations of these models, they have been found helpful by practitioners in the church and can point to what happens in reality, as opposed to the ideal aspirations of spiritual growth in a mature individual. The descriptions of the contrasts between 'affiliative, or conforming faith' and 'owned faith' have been found to offer a useful vocabulary for observing spiritual patterns. Individuals and those involved in training or spiritual direction have found these descriptions of different patterns of faith / spiritual engagement helpful in recognising some characteristics of faith development (or the absence of them.) Responses from practitioners on the church adult education networks indicate that some courses that expect a lot of personal reflection and questioning are particularly popular with those in their 50s and 60s who want to move away from an "affiliative faith" model that they perceive as having been encouraged by some churches. Other older people whose experience of faith has in the past been of "affiliative faith" may need support in moving to practices that encourage more reflective "owned faith".
75. It is significant to note that most writers on this subject repeatedly note that not everyone will necessarily progress through all the stages. There is also recognition from some that patterns will be affected by cultural conditioning, such as whether people grew up in a society where it was acceptable to publicly express doubt or questions. However a major feature of later developmental stages is repeatedly seen to be a growth in questioning and puzzling. Westerhoff notes 'searching faith' as a later characteristic, McClaren notes a stage of 'Perplexity', Scott-Peck one of 'Skeptic and Individual', while more familiar is John of the Cross's much quoted phrase

“dark night of the soul”. An outline of several different stage models is listed at appendix 2.

Story and Memory

76. MacKinlay notes that “one of the spiritual tasks of later life is to tell our story, in the context of approaching the last career of life, preparing to die. This is where we can come to know the final meaning of our lives.”⁵⁵ Various methods can encourage engagement with a person’s story. Many at any stage of life will be familiar with exercises encouraging the mapping on one’s own spiritual journey, the writing of a journal or spiritual autobiography. Amongst older people some of the work can be done through spiritual reminiscence groups. Work in this area has been described as ‘narrative gerontology’.
77. Spiritual reminiscence develops further the more general processes used with reminiscence groups. In spiritual reminiscence, encouragement is given by asking questions about issues such as joy, sadness, grief or regrets. MacKinlay reports a project looking at spiritual reminiscence where participants all regularly remembered the meeting time, arrived early and (unusually in that setting) chatted animatedly after. “Sometimes people cry or become upset as they speak of difficult or sad times. There is a feeling in aged care that people should be happy all the time or be jollied out of feeling sad. By continually demeaning the older person’s feelings or not taking these seriously, we encourage lack of communication”⁵⁶ Remembering and reprocessing of earlier negative memories may help moves towards integration.
78. Jennifer Moon’s approach to the progressive stages of reflection from initial noticing to making meaning offer one approach to enabling reminiscence to develop into learning (see also paragraph 33). Various frameworks of theological reflection or ‘examen’ can also be drawn on and adapted to encourage this process.
79. Bianchi suggests that the very telling of an individual’s story is a spiritual act and a quest for personal meaning, especially when vulnerabilities are shared. Such an approach would see the potential role of a pastoral carer as offering attentive listening, rather than as a possible dispenser of comfort.

Wisdom

80. Wisdom is intrinsically linked to the spiritual journey “since it has to do with meaning: meaning of life, of relationships, of ourselves, of the cosmos (Randall and Kenyon 2001). It has been noted that ageing and spirituality can be looked at as both outer processes (what is observable) and inner processes. The same is true of wisdom - which like spirituality has a variety of definitions in the literature, some psychological and cognitive and some

spiritual constructs. Different conclusions may be drawn depending on the definition used: some research into personal wisdom undertaken in Germany⁵⁷ analysed differences between a young and an older group in relation to aspects of wisdom including tolerance of ambiguity, and found no difference in the scores of the two groups.

81. Atchley suggests that both wisdom and spirituality are “sensetizing concepts that do not have a concrete referent”, and Elizabeth MacKinlay sees wisdom as “very similar to spiritual integrity”. She notes that one of its characteristics is “*an increased tolerance to uncertainty, a deepening search for meaning in life, including an awareness of the paradoxical and contradictory nature of reality; it involves transcendence of uncertainty and a move from external to internal regulation*”⁵⁸
82. Wisdom is not the same as knowledge. Robert Atchley, drawing on other writings, suggests it includes elements that are Affective (compassion, absence of negative emotion), Cognitive(Understanding meaning, accepting uncertainty) and Reflective (Insight, diminished self-centredness, with multiple perspectives leading to self-awareness)⁵⁹. Wisdom is firmly grounded in everyday life. James Woodward suggests it can be mistaken for foolishness, as it is neither conventional nor rational, and is always individual. Along with many more traditional cultures, he suggests that elders and their wisdom “*can give cultural and social meaning to younger generations. They are guardians and transmitters of truth and purpose.*”⁶⁰
83. Robert Atchley has worked extensively over the last two decades on spiritual wisdom and ageing, and sees dimensions of inner spirituality especially likely to emerge and ripen in later life. He writes: “*I think it is no accident that, for centuries, philosophical and spiritual wisdom has mostly been the province of people with a lot of life experience of the subject*”⁶¹. He has undertaken some longitudinal studies, and suggests that some spiritual development increases over time, so that older people are in a position to develop as “sages” or “spiritual elders”. Possible developments in this area addressed in section D.
84. In his article *Living with Elder Wisdom*, Eugene Bianchi sees that to develop purposes in elderhood is a key part of “wise ageing”. He writes of “creative elders” who welcome new possibilities, foster freedom in their lives and may embrace social causes. This would link with Elizabeth MacKinlay’s thoughts on the importance of ‘transcendence’. The academic Peter Coleman notes that while people often look to the stability and continuity provided by institutional religion, in order to establish integrity this also needs to offer people space and opportunity to express fears and doubts and to ask hard questions: the acceptance of paradox can enable those who develop wisdom to live with issues they previously found unresolved.
85. Some societies value the wisdom of older people highly: an African proverb that states that “an old person has eaten wisdom”. However it is seen as of less significance in western cultures that have developed an attitude where youth is highly prized, knowledge is often seen as transitory, and with that

the value of past experience of only limited significance. In practical terms, there is a danger that this becomes a vicious circle. Leo Missinne writes: *"If young people want to have a meaningful older age, it would be good that they learn to respect and to love older people. If they as youngsters disrespect the older generation and see no meaning of life in older age, they will become another example of the theory of self-fulfilling prophesy. They will hate themselves when they are old and find no meaning and pride in their old age."*⁶²

The church, learning and older people

86. Church provision relating to later life is more widespread in the area of 'spiritual care' than in encouraging formal or informal learning. While this care can be seen in terms of bringing care and comfort and have a dimension of a 'strength to weakness' mentality, which can fail to fully embrace the value of work in alongside older people in ways that helps raise consciousness in order to become empowered and resourced. The literature makes it clear that offering spiritual development opportunities promotes healthy spirituality. Many of MacKinlay's writings were initially addressed to nurses and others in the caring professions, and she explains the tasks that such carers can be involved with to promote individuals' involvement with the spiritual tasks of ageing⁶³
87. Key to the findings in the literature is the importance of an older individual developing a personal faith and spirituality, whether this is described as 'owned faith' or personal spirituality or spiritual meaning. This presents different challenges to different generations of older people. Some currently approaching old age I have talked with see the purpose of faith as "being good", and having been brought up with didactic teaching in the church, can expect the church to tell them the answers of how to do this. A challenge is then to help build a bridge between the Christian story and vision and their own experience. Those in a younger "rising elderly" generation may have less residual memory of the Christian story, and so the church may want to ensure that opportunities to share it are maximized. The challenge here is to develop approaches that get beyond simply telling the story, but enabling this to be integrated with personal experiences. The current lack of provision for older people means that some have emphasized the task of making such provision rather than what is provided, whether or not it may be helpful.

D EMERGING ISSUES

Generational Cohorts

88. Recognition of differences between generational cohorts is key to interpreting much of the writing on ageing and to planning for future action. Detailed empirical research has frequently been done with relatively small groups in a particular social context, so any conclusions drawn are likely to reflect sociological variables as much as chronological age. It is important to recognise limitations of some of the work that has been undertaken, and not make over-generalisations on the basis of research findings that emerge from work with very specific groups.
89. In a rapidly changing society each generational cohort will have distinct characteristics. Any groups born within a particular period share some formative influences in terms of attitudes, culture, key memories etc. This concept is now becoming more familiar than was the case in previous more stable social contexts. 'Generation X' and 'Generation Y' are terms used increasingly frequently to describe younger age cohorts, whose formative cultures have included such factors as universal electronic technology or the ethos of the Thatcher years. The post World War 2 Baby Boomer generation has specific characteristics, and this group is described by Ann Morisy as the "blessed generation", which has lived with expectations of always having enough.⁶⁴ Rob Merchant draws attention to the pioneering dimension needed of an extended period of later life that did not exist for previous generations.
90. A characteristic of this "rising older age" group lies in the fact that World War 2 acts as a pivot in terms of attitudes. Post-war generations tend to make decisions less on the basis of 'duty', but more on 'self fulfillment'. This generation will be pioneers of a new way of life in terms of older age. Some work undertaken by Mike Collyer of the Church Army research unit notes differences in attitudes between two older generational cohorts. He charts differences between those aged between 55 and 75 (labelled by him as the Saga generation) and those he calls the 'senior generation' over the age of 75. He observes sociological, psychological and personal differences. Compared to the older group, the 'saga' group is likely to be spiritual rather than religious, be more likely to think for themselves rather than expect to be told what to do, expect choice, and be less likely to expect institutional structures.
91. A Christian perspective often describes people as best achieving fulfillment in relationship and in community. Current writings on the Trinity offer a theological underpinning of the importance of such inter-relatedness. Theological messages are not always matched by the assumptions people pick up from society - often subconsciously. In some current western communities, an older generation may have more expectation of interdependence than younger people, who tend to be raised to be independent. The disappearance of some former traditional patterns of

family life (such as less eating together, and belonging to individual networks) means that many young people receive little socialization into patterns of mutual interdependence despite a growing awareness of interdependence at a global scale, in social terms individual autonomy is highly prized. This could possibly contribute in the future to a more negative attitude to deep old age, with assumptions about frail elderly people being increasingly seen as a burden gaining precedence over insights such as those of John Stott who writes of dependence as a natural characteristic of older age.⁶⁵

Practicalities

92. The work of the church will need to adapt to new patterns. It is important to recognise that the coming 'older generation' will be very different from those who are currently at that stage of life. Expectations and assumptions, as well as needs, will change and the church and its ministers will need to approach challenges with flexibility and creativity. Some spiritual practices frequently advocated as appropriate for the older generation (e.g. familiar hymns) will have a limited shelf life. While many of today's 3rd and 4th agers were brought up in a setting where the assumptions of 'Christendom' were still dominant, as described in paragraph 87, this will not remain true for all those of the 'baby boomer' or later generational cohorts.

"3rd" and "4th" agers in the church

93. The consumer society has a tendency to discard the old and value the new, and older people can at times feel this approach has permeated the church and that they are sidelined. The emphasis on ministries with children and young people has often left older people sensing that they are not valued. The church may not consciously intend this message to be conveyed. Even if such attitudes are not intended, recent work in relation to diversity has drawn attention to ways in which it is important to recognise discrimination in 'perception' and not just 'intention'.
94. Statistically, those reaching what has been seen as the traditional retirement today are likely to be looking forward to an average of 15 years of active life when they could potentially make a significant contribution in some way. These are the new 3rd agers, the active elderly, occasionally described as those in the "new middle age". However described, this age cohort is a new phenomenon, and there is no value in looking to former expectations and patterns of life for those who reach what was a statutory retirement age.
95. The scoping report *Ageing, Burden or Blessing?* observed that older people are a "resource for carrying forward the life of the church". In many churches, a large proportion of voluntary tasks undertaken by members are carried out by the 'recently retired'. Social changes, with long working hours and women at work, have changed the pattern of potential voluntary activity. Older people are now performing many of the tasks and roles that

would most likely have been seen as the responsibility of 'young wives' 50 years ago. A vicar recently commented, "When I want something done I look for someone recently retired". However this pattern may be a temporary phenomenon and changes in retirement and pensionable age may make this cohort less available in the future.

96. In both the Church of England and the Methodist Church there has been a significant increase in the number and proportion of older candidates for authorised ministries, including many who are over the age of 50 or 60. Within the churches this has frequently been described as a problem. It is rarely described as an indication of the willingness of older people in their 3rd age to undertake some substantial training and learning and to undertake a new role at this stage of life. The number of older candidates offering for ministry clearly indicates the willingness of a number of older people to invest time and energy both in training and in serving the church in ministry as part of their 're-invented retirement'.
97. Patterns of authorized ministry and training have developed over time, and reflect social patterns that have shaped them. . A significant model originally arose partly out the assumption that people were being prepared for a solo ministry in charge of a church, parish or circuit. Careful work has recently been done ecumenically to clarify learning outcomes for authorised ministries⁶⁶. To some extent this work has developed from the inheritance of all-round competence needed for a 'jack of all trades' pattern of ministry. Current patterns of lengthy discernment and training have emerged when the pattern of ministry originally presumed had been that of younger people preparing for a ministry that would encompass their entire working lives.
98. Formally authorized ministries will not offer a pattern of involvement in ministry that will be appropriate for all. Many 3rd agers will have commitments and responsibilities such as grandchild care, which will not necessarily enable a regular ongoing participation in training for formal ministry. Older people's contribution to the ministry and support of the church can be considerable, informally as well as in the form of formally authorised ministries.
99. Many discussions of older people's ministry explore ways in which an older age group can undertake tasks it was once expected younger people would undertake. There has been less written about potential contributions older people can make to church life and ministry which arise out of their particular experience and perspective. These may include expressions of spirituality, wisdom and faith experience. Ian Knox writes of the importance of older people offering care and encouragement to others in the church, mentioning activities such as 'prayer companions' and 'spiritual parents'.⁶⁷ The potential of some older people to be more prayerful and reflective at this stage of life is explored further in paragraphs 59ff. This attribute of 'the second half of life' that could contribute to the service of the church. For example, Robert Atchley⁶⁸ advocates the value to communities of 'sages' and 'spiritual elders'. He perceives this as being a role that can be developed intentionally and does not just happen, though one where almost anybody

can choose to develop capacity. Such a role could offer acknowledgement of a particular function and gifting within a community, without being a formal category of ministry authorised centrally. It could be helpful to explore further ways in which people with the potential to be spiritual 'elders' could develop this gift and skill for the benefit of the church and community.

Practicalities

- I00. Some practices in churches could be intentionally improved or initiated to support and strengthen the dignity of older people and recognise their value and contribution. Ministry, including pastoral and social care, can be done with and through older people and not just to or for them. While any recognition and affirmation of such ministry may appropriately be at a local level, some form of more central resourcing to encourage this could help patterns be seen as valued. One way (though not the only way) to do this might be to invest in the training and ongoing resourcing of some older people to themselves act as 'champions' to encourage older people's local service and ministry.
- I01. Older people within the church could also be supported in exploring how they could be involved alongside others in the community in the process of 're-inventing retirement' for themselves and others. The challenge of a rising age profile in the population will create new social needs, and the current presence of groups of active '3rd agers' in churches could open up very different potential areas of ministry from those inherited from days when ministry was the province of individuals and included a lot of one-to-one work. It may be that the model of 'self-help' incorporated in the U3A way of working could be expanded and developed in a variety of ways and contexts, maybe using church venues and partnerships between the church and other players. The current dismantling of some local authority infrastructure may create needs that the church and its new '3rd age' cohort could respond to.
- I02. Opportunities are increasingly emerging for the church to serve the needs of older people in the community. For example, the experience of the diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich is that the church is able to take a lead in local networking of a wide variety of organisations, and this has been a constructive experience which has encouraged the church and older people themselves to engage in a wide variety of activities, including learning.⁶⁹
- I03. Future changes in retirement and pensionable age may affect patterns, particularly in relation to recruitment to formal authorised ministries. These trends will need to be monitored, especially in places where the ministry of 'retired' authorized ministers is being incorporated into future ministry strategies. It is possible that different models of volunteer recruitment or training might be appropriate when a short period of active ministry is envisaged. Different forms might be explored - maybe offering formal support/ accountability to a particular activity or project rather than focusing just on the formation of individuals for ministry authorized ministers.

Learning and spiritual development opportunities for church

104. A Christian and Biblical perspective sees the entire life course as held within the purposes of God, and so of essential value. All are on a lifelong journey, and the changes and development that take place involve conscious or unconscious learning. Many active older people would not want to be segregated, and welcome 'all adult' learning opportunities and programmes. Intergenerational learning is important, though some activities billed as 'all age' are in fact thinly disguised children's work. In the course of undertaking this project, other intentional projects and activities have been observed: activities based on spirituality appear to offer some opportunities for inter-generational learning. Frequently, however, it seems that timetabling and the preference of many older people for daytime activities results in older groups meeting separately. One writer has suggested possible areas where age-segregation may be appropriate:

- Subjects that need to be taught in a particular way because of observable decline in the physical abilities of specific elderly groups.
- When there is a specific case / rationale for doing so (e.g. a focus for elderly people living in isolation) ⁷⁰

105. The literature and research reviewed in section C, do reveal different key underlying themes relating to spiritual needs and learning opportunities for older people in the church, and practical implications of these have been extended by discussion and observation. Writers and practitioners all express awareness of the growing challenge of this given the demographic profile of the population. The starting point for some is that of Pastoral Concern, and literature related to wellbeing indicates that learning activities can make a positive contribution here. In addition to "well-being", many discussions relating to opportunities for learning and spirituality amongst older people in the church draw on two different strands of perspective and emphasis. While these approaches are in no way mutually exclusive categories, they reveal different starting points and I have labelled these "PRESENT NEEDS" and "SECOND HALF OF LIFE".

106. Concerns around 'Present Needs' include awareness of the current patterns of faith (or lack of it) in older people, and seek to respond to this need and develop people's belief and practice. The importance of presenting and engaging with Christian faith is a driving concern. One way of promoting engagement is to tap into people's childhood memories of religious practice. This can build on adult education principles noting that learning best takes place when people 'start where they are' and build from there. It has also been found to enable some involvement of those experiencing dementia. Collyer's research (see paragraph 71) indicated that in some places at least most older people can hold a 'conforming' faith, and may look back to faith practiced in a way that anticipated a degree of dependency - or at the least value some form of clear input or stimulus.

107. The other discourse emerges from many 'second half of life' studies and writings, and focuses on the potential later years offer individuals for reflecting on life experience, making meaning and developing a wise and openly accepting approach to faith. Although many developmental and spiritual writings looking specifically on the second half of life are recent and may link to the individualization of society noted, there is a long history to this discourse. Yvonne Craig notes that ancient wisdom talked of three virtues for the elderly: "*MEMORIA coming to terms with the past creatively; DOCILITAS being alert and attentive to the present; SOLERTIA - simplicity, a time to get rid of things, to cope with the way energy runs out...*"⁷¹ These echo spiritual tasks of ageing noted by MacKinlay (see paragraph 57), and also include the recognition that 'downsizing' may be an emotional and spiritual task as well as a practical one. Woodward looks to the parable of the grain of wheat (John 12.24) to note the need to be rid of "*so much that seemed good in the first half of life...before we can reach out to take hold of the wealth that lies ahead.*"⁷²
108. There is a need to be aware of both these sets of concerns. This is illustrated by research quoted in *Older people and the Church*, which highlights the divergent approaches of individuals, as "*28% of older respondents felt that the Church no longer helped them to grow and rather more that a questioning faith did not seem to be acceptable. (Conversely, it needs to be said that an equivalent number were looking for greater certainty in the Church's teaching.)*"⁷³ Given the co-existence of those with differing spiritual hopes, this is likely to be a particular challenge when working alongside groups of older people which may include those who have very different experiences and expectations. Such a situation is likely to arise for example in residential homes.

Current work in this area

109. Older people I have spoken with in the course of this study have frequently valued activities laid on for the senior age group as much for the provision itself as for any particular content. At times it seems that the social dimension of an event has been the major factor in their response to work done. However it is clear that there is a danger that some materials produced for use with older people can be seen as simplistic or patronizing by some. This criticism can relate also to styles of group leadership / facilitation that are sometimes offered, especially by those whose own experience of learning was of formal didactic contexts that they tend to reproduce, rather than in the context of more interactive adult learning methodologies.
110. Some practitioners are experimenting with approaches to older people and their developmental and learning needs. Graham Hawley, a retired Methodist minister, has evolved a programme for an informal and interactive half day workshop with older people, responding to needs expressed when he undertook some research for an MA dissertation.⁷⁴

111. Ann Morisy talks of the clear value for people of being able to articulate and listen to themselves in order to reflect on issues and experience. The PSALM project she heads up in London aims to provide workshops and structured opportunities for discussion in order to “help people navigate our new longevity - especially drawing on the resources of faith”. Helping others do this and make meaning requires facilitative skills.
112. Learning events can encompass an awareness of both ‘present needs’ and ‘second half of life’ issues. An illustrative example is ‘Senior Alpha’. There is a clear expectation that the course will present Christian faith to participants. In addition the course structure including open-ended question opportunities can potentially give opportunities for issues of concern to be raised by participants - and I noted a repeated comment that leaders had initially underestimated the time the time discussion could take. One course leader I interviewed seemed surprised that participants seemed to be learning more through discussion and from each others’ comments than from the input. Another observation from an experienced ‘senior ministries worker’ noted that the basic material could be further adapted with suggestions for introducing some particular discussions with this age group. A specific ‘second half of life’ issue mentioned was the topic of Christian death, where she felt the course did not help offer ways to open up the discussion when the topic was mentioned in the material. Madeline Light has undertaken research with focus groups and interview, aiming to evaluate the difference participation in Senior Alpha had made to participants of previous courses. She notes the key value of the non-judgemental question and discussion process advocated, and that “*this age group are more likely to treat faith as something deeply personal and private and so for them hearing others was like a light switching on, particularly to hear other people have the same doubt or the same questions.*”⁷⁵
113. Few resources exist that are designed to be used by older people themselves in ‘self-help’ groups to promote reflection or discussion. A notable exception is the rich anthology of suggestions and resources ‘*What shall we do now?*’ described as “Christian resources for older people prepared by the Women’s Network of the Methodist Church, but sadly no longer in print. Very recently, Robert Atwell has produced *The Contented Life: Spirituality and the gift of years*⁷⁶, which invites individual reflection but could also act as a stimulus to group discussion.
114. Some training around issues of ageing is increasingly being offered to those involved in ministry. However although no comprehensive survey has been undertaken, discussions held with a range of individuals involved in IME and CPD suggest that the focus of this training is frequently pastoral, and some may (possibly unwittingly) be reinforcing stereotypes of the elderly as dependent and promoting strength to weakness models of care. Focus on chaplaincy in residential homes could encourage such patterns of thinking. Ministers also need to address issues related to learning and spiritual development needs of older people.

Practicalities

- 115. It is inappropriate to have an expectation that all “ought” to develop, change gear and journey. But it is important to create opportunities so that those who wish to journey can be helped to do so, especially as there are indications that many are finding it difficult to approach faith in this way in their churches.
- 116. There is a clear need to carefully select and develop resources and possible patterns of learning in relation to individuals need, and give people opportunities to explore beyond traditional boundaries of ‘conforming faith’. There is a clear need for resources to be designed and sessions facilitated in ways that offer potential for reflective questioning by those who seek opportunities to do this
- 117. There are currently not many ‘self-help’ / ‘self-use’ materials that can be used by older individuals and groups. It could be helpful to offer appropriate tools and training to clergy, Readers, pastoral assistants and others working with older people in the church. Those with experience in adult education and in spiritual development could offer perspectives and insights here. Another area where particular training could help maximize learning and developmental opportunities lies in the area of helping others “make meaning”.

Preparation for Death

- 118. Attitudes to death are shaped by local custom and culture. Many who have lived or worked in other countries are aware of a prevailing western approach that avoids or is embarrassed by discussion or celebration of death. There is a feeling that death is sometimes seen as a taboo subject, with society engaged in an apparent conspiracy to pretend that death barely exists. This may partly be an inherited reaction against over-elaborate Victorian codes and etiquettes surrounding mourning.
- 119. Part of the difficulty in discussing death may relate to an ambivalence both in and outside the church to some of the vocabulary that may be used to describe death, and the assured epithets relating to going to “a better place”, “heaven”, “the next world” etc. Many people imagine they know what Christians “ought” to believe about death, and may avoid discussion that might reveal their uncertainty here. Rarely is discussion opened up with words such as Lesslie Newbigin’s comments that while “*religion has been fertile in producing words to suggest what may lie beyond the curtain....in truth we do not and cannot see what lies beyond.....What is made available to us through Jesus...is not a sketch of what lies beyond the curtain but a firmly marked way through the curtain.*”

- I 20. The reluctance to address the issue of death may also relate to the high value we attribute to advances in medical skill and the ability to prolong life, and our tendency to assume we can control our lives. Death is in some ways then seen as a failure. John Swinton⁷⁷ draws attention to the extent to which the medical model currently dominates our thinking, assuming that work with those who are not physically healthy involves a cure and restoration to health in order not to be seen as a failure.
- I 21. Awareness of the taboo currently surrounding 'death' is one that is beginning to be of concern beyond the church as well as in it, and some resources are being produced for any regardless of their faith position⁷⁸. Churches need to give attention to particular perspectives offered by faith. Gerry Burke, a Roman Catholic priest, worked for many years with the secular organisation 'Age Concern' and produced *Dying and death: What have Christians to say to secular society?* He concludes, "Those who accept God as creator and final end will want to experience the whole of each part of being alive. God calls us in life. God calls us in death. Christians wait for that call. HOW WE WAIT will convince others - not how we argue, cajole or coerce"⁷⁹
- I 22. There has been a growing willingness to acknowledge some aspects of death in the church through the increasing work and literature on bereavement and the care of the bereaved. The focus of much of this work is primarily pastoral care, but can raise the topic of death in ways that rescue it from being a forbidden topic. For example, Ian Ainsworth-Smith and Peter Speck's book *Letting Go: Caring for the dying and bereaved*⁸⁰ talks about the value of "education for death" by discussing the issue in sermons and seminars, and while the context is primarily that of preparing people to care rather than preparing them to die, the suggestion could help to develop a culture within which death is not excluded from a person's spirituality.
- I 23. James Woodward's *Befriending Death*⁸¹ offers information and suggested questions. These provide individuals with thoughts and exercises for reflection to develop awareness, as well as a collection of prayers and spiritual readings. One of the themes that emerges in the book is that growth is possible "when we take time to reflect on what is happening to us." Another theme is that of creating an appropriate context that enables people to feel able to safely address the issue of their death. The URC has produced a resource pack titled "...A Time to Die". In addition to material on bereavement support this includes a section on "preparing the Way", which is aimed at work with older people and aims to "help equip churches to create an environment in which people feel secure and safe about discussing death and the issues around it." It recognises that elderly people may have a fear of death and advocates the possible value of a small group sensitively led offering a supportive base "ensuring opportunity for people to address their fears in a safe and supportive environment". Further materials offered include a questionnaire that people can complete anonymously which may open up the issues prior to small group discussion.
- I 24. Other ways of opening up the conversation can be possible. One Roman Catholic Church in Birmingham has been developing a pattern of

encouraging people to produce a plan for their own funeral. This was started in response to finding that the custom of offering a Requiem Mass was not being observed by the children of some life-long church members who had died. It was then found that producing plans opened up valuable opportunities for individuals to discuss hopes, fears and issues of faith.

125. The process of dying well is described by Elizabeth MacKinlay as the last or “final career”. She also talks of the importance of dying being openly spoken about. Much of her research has been undertaken in residential homes, where she suggests that removed from a family setting dying and death have become medicalized, and the knowledge of the way to die is being lost. Approaching death is a key issue to be addressed in her suggested spiritual tasks of ageing, and she suggests the value of someone else to accompany the being there to “walk that journey into death”. She says *“perhaps what is needed is a midwife for dying...we have midwives trained to assist at our birth into this world; so we need to develop skills that will enable carers to walk the journey towards death with the elderly person who is in the process of dying.”*⁸²

Practicalities

126. Resources available that focus on paying attention to intentional preparation for death encourage a purposeful approach to this. There is a stress on the need for time to reflect, a safe environment within which to express thoughts, and the value of sensitive ‘accompanying’ of the individual or a group. Further work in this area is being undertaken by the SCOP unit in the diocese of Oxford, and the Leveson Centre among others has run training sessions focusing on this issue. Resources that do exist, such as Woodward’s *Befriending death*, could helpfully be used as the way in the training for clergy and pastoral workers.

E. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

127. **Lack of use of existing materials:** It has become evident that many writings and resources in this area is not used, even where it has been specifically designed for churches (for example, see paragraph 27). Materials published in the past may have been quickly forgotten or have gone out of print. Small printed booklets available for sale by post seem inaccessible in a day and age when material can be accessed electronically. Even books published by mainstream publishers are not regularly stocked by Christian bookshops. Material available for sale from websites has been found listed as a sub-sub-sub menu on a website, with no indication on the home page that publications are available. Often only the knowledgeable or determined will find or gain access to some resources. One of the key needs is to make material available accessible, along with the growing body of good practice.
128. **Website possibility:** The report *Ageing: Burden or Blessing?* suggested the possibility of establishing a website. This idea could be further explored. Such a site would need to include a section on faith and spiritual development, and collate and promote resources that offer models of good practice and do not simply offer a 'strength to weakness' approach. Ideally a website of this nature could be ecumenical, and link to materials produced by a range of agencies. Experience suggests that professional support would enhance design and help showcase and promote work.
129. **Faith Development resources** Not all materials produced for older people demonstrate much awareness of the opportunities or needs of the 'second half of life'. There is a need to promote appropriate approaches to older people's faith development needs, and encourage facilitative approaches that enable older people to hear themselves think and make meaning.
130. **Older people as a resource within the church** It is important to note not only possible ways in which this could be facilitated, Paragraphs 86 - 92 describe a range of possibilities and challenges both for formally authorised and local roles. Possibilities also exist for churches hosting community learning opportunities (maybe sounding less 'academic' than U3A, but using some of the insights / patterns), with older people themselves involved in this as an appropriate area of skills development the church might offer to some '3rd agers'
131. **Network Possibilities.** An increasing number of individuals are researching practices related to older people in the church, and there is particular interest in faith and spirituality issues. Very little structured sharing of good practice on these developments is taking place between dioceses / those working with groups of older people. This could be developed and might include practical suggestions and experiences (if linked with a website:

it could enable networking across work done at congregational / deanery / circuit / diocesan / ecumenical levels). Given the rapidly expanding interest in work in this area, it might be possible to hold an initial 'forum' of those in the church currently engaged in research and developing practice, though some researchers have indicated they would not want to share work in progress pre-publication, partly for fear of losing their 'ownership' of any original findings or ideas.

132. ***Resourcing, awareness raising and training clergy and churches.***

There are key training and development issues. Training offered to ministers to resource them for work with elderly people needs to be aware of learning and spiritual development opportunities. Care is needed to ensure that it does not reinforce stereotypes of the elderly as dependent people, or only promote 'strength to weakness' models of ministry.

Appendix I. Organisations Consulted

Several agencies (often quite small) have valuable specialist experience in this area. Some resources are published and available (often as small printed leaflets) to those who search them out.

- **MHA** (MHA Care Group, formerly known as Methodist Homes for the Aged) have a long established and respected voice in this area. Their chaplaincy and spirituality department have leading experience, and they offer some useful publications.
- **Outlook Trust** have a particular concern for evangelism amongst elderly people. They seek to encourage the church to be more active in the area of work with older people.
- **The Leveson Centre** for spirituality, ageing and social policy produced a series of issue papers. Its previous director was James Woodward.
- **The Christian Council on Ageing** (CCOA) is ecumenical
- **Oxford Diocese** - Spiritual Care of Older People (SCOP)
- **The Church Army's Sheffield Centre** produced a valuable set of information bulletins focusing on older people (though the officer driving this has now retired)
- **PSALM** (the Project for Seniors and Lifelong Ministry) - an ecumenical charity providing "lectures, workshops and seminars with the specific aim of addressing matters of interest and concern to people over 60, or those approaching retirement, or anyone with an interest in ageing and spirituality."
- **Age UK** (the new title of an amalgamation of Age Concern and Help the Aged)
- **NIACE** had a unit (titled 'Older and Bolder') which produced several policy papers relating to education with older people. The unit has now been disbanded, though some work continues, and individuals involved have been helpful.
- **Third Age Trust** The University of the 3rd Age (U3A) research committee

Appendix 2 : Faith Development

Descriptive spiritual stages / formational

□ TERESA OF AVILLA: (1515-1582)

Metaphor of 'Interior Castle' (enters through gate of conversion, proceeds through mansions / rooms)

□ JOHN OF THE CROSS: (1542 - 1592)

The purgative way (beginners) / the purifying dark night of the senses / the illuminative way / the dark night of the spirit / the unitive way (way of the perfect)

□ EVELYN UNDERHILL: (1875 - 1941)

Awakening / Purification / Illumination / Dark night / Union with God

□ BRIAN McCLAREN: (*Naked Spirituality*, 2010, Hodder and Stoughton)

- SIMPLICITY spiritual awakening,
- COMPLEXITY spiritual strengthening, developing practices of confession, intercession, petition
- PERPLEXITY: spiritual surviving, questions and disillusionment
- HARMONY : spiritual deepening , meditation, contemplation, consecration.

□ WESTERHOFF: (*From 'Will our Children Have Faith?' 1976. Describes 'styles of faith' rather than linear stages, and though descriptive acknowledges having seen Fowler's research at time of writing*)

- EXPERIENCED FAITH
- AFFILIATIVE FAITH
- SEARCHING FAITH
- OWNED FAITH

Developmental models (Post Jung and Erikson)

□ FOWLER: (*Stages of Faith*, 1981, Harper and Row)

(0	UNDIFFERENTIATED FAITH	Nursed / foundation)
1	INTUITIVE-PROJECTIVE FAITH	Unordered / chaotic
2	MYTHICAL-LITERAL FAITH	Ordering
3	SYNTHETIC-CONVENTIONAL FAITH	Conforming
4	INDIVIDUATIVE-REFLECTIVE FAITH	Choosing/ Either-Or
5	CONJUNCTIVE FAITH	Balanced/inclusive/Both-and
6	UNIVERSALISING FAITH	Selfless

□ SCOTT PECK (*1978: The Road Less Travelled*)

- CHAOTIC AND ANTISOCIAL : Egoistical . Most children - Self willed, often unprincipled, unwilling to accept a will greater than their own. Lack empathy.
- FORMAL AND INSTITUTIONAL: Blind faith in authority figures. Like unambiguous formulae / rigid structures as a counterbalance to stage 1.
- SKEPTIC AND INDIVIDUAL - serious questioning. Some may become agnostic, some seek truth and progress
- MYSTICAL AND COMMUNAL Able to hold ambiguities, rather than see everything as competing camps. Loving others as yourself, losing attachment to ego.

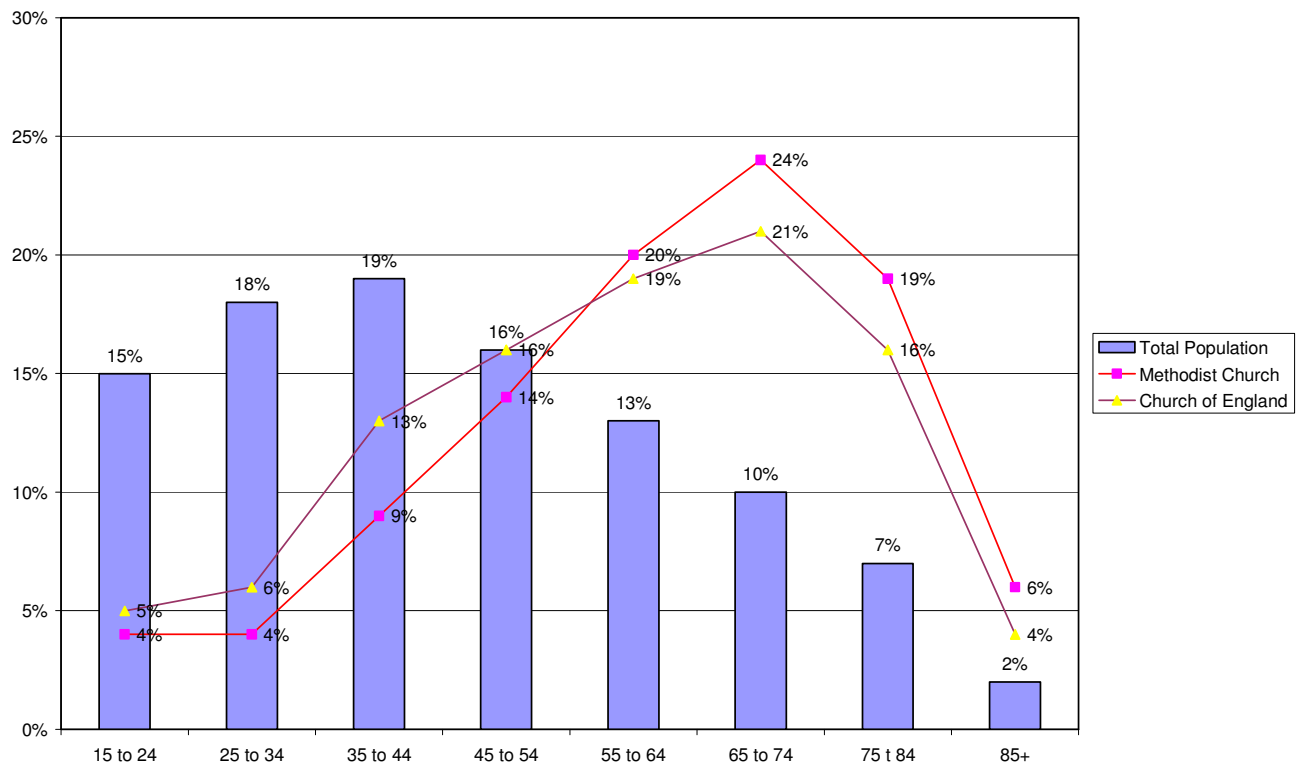
Survey based descriptive stages

□ WILLOW CREEK (*Hawkins and Parkinson, 2007, Reveal: 'Where are you? Willow Creek*)

Model developed on survey of behaviours and spiritual attitudes/priorities

- EXPLORING CHRISTIANITY: Interested but not fully committed
- GROWING IN CHRIST: Active, participating in church activities
- CLOSE TO GOD: Prayer central to spiritual life
- CHRIST-CENTRED: Prayer a constant conversation with God and service to others a way of life. But tendency to find the church not helping them grow spiritually

Appendix 3: Church Membership and Age



Church Life Survey 2001: Comparison of age profiles of total UK population with those of Church of England and Methodist congregations

1. Notes:

A. INTRODUCTION

¹ Jewell, A (ed) *Older People and the Church* 2001, Methodist Publishing House.
(© Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes) - often referred to as the 'Halley Stewart project', after the funding body.

B. THE CURRENT AGEING AGENDA

² Recent examples include:

* UK government Office for Science (2008) - Mental Capacity and Wellbeing project .

* EU - LARA

³ e.g. the UK governments 'New Dynamics of Ageing' cross-council research project.

⁴ Regularly updated page at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/older-people>

⁵ Morisy, A (2011) *Borrowing from the Future*, London: Continuum, p 175ff,

⁶ Mowat, H. Ageing, Spirituality and Health -http://www.sach.org.uk/journal/0801p07_mowat.pdf
(accessed 22.07.11)

⁷ Pontifical Council for the Laity (1998): *The Dignity of Older People and their Mission in the Church and in the World*

⁸ Merchant, R. (2003) *Pioneering the Third Age: The Church in an Ageing Population*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press

⁹ Swinton, J and Paryne, R. *Living Well and Dying Faithfully*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2009)

¹⁰ National Parish Congregation Diversity Monitoring 2007

¹¹ Jewell (2001) op cit p 104-5

¹² Atwell, R. (2011) *The Contented Life: Spirituality and the Gift of years* Norwich: Canterbury Press,

C. LEARNING AND SPIRITUALITY: EXISTING LITERATURE

¹³ RSA Brainwaves module, *Neuroscience: implications for education and lifelong learning*
<http://royalsociety.org/brainwaves-education/> (accessed 22.07.11)

¹⁴ www.bia-net.org/eubia (accessed 22.07.2011)

¹⁵ Gladdish, L (ed) (2008) *Learning Participation and choice: A guide for facilitating older learners*
Leicester: NIACE

¹⁶ www.laraproject.net (accessed 22.07.2011)

¹⁷ See <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=294366> (accessed 22.07.2011)

¹⁸ Kirkwood, T., Bond, J., May, C., McKeith, I. and Teh, M. (2008)

Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project.

Mental capital through life: Future challenges.

The Government Office for Science, London., p61

¹⁹ Moon, J. (1999) *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development*. London: Kogan Page.

²⁰ Jung, C. 'The Stages of Life' (1960) quotes in J. Walker, unpublished paper on building learning congregations (2000)

²¹ E.g Alwin and Krosnick *Aging and susceptibility to attitude change*
<http://comm.stanford.edu/faculty/krosnick/docs/Aging%20and%20Att%20Change%20-%20Krosnick%20and%20Alwin.pdf> (accessed 27.07.11)

²² Light, M and O'Brien, O. Ministering with and to Older People in *Practical Theology 4.1* (2011) p23

²³ Jewell, A (1999) *Spirituality and Ageing*, London: Jessica Kingsley p.10

²⁴ Merchant, R. (2003) Op cit p 128

²⁵ Spirituality and Ageing - Age Concern, Issue 2 Summer 2004

²⁶ Atchley, R (2009), *Spirituality and Ageing* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press p 16

²⁷ Walker, J Learning from the inside out-mapping spirituality and ageing, *International Journal of Education and Ageing* !:2 (2010)

²⁸ D. Jenkins, Geriatric Burden of Elderly Blessing, in Jewell (ed) *Ageing, Spirituality and Well-being* – Jessica Kingsley Publishers (2004) p 198-9

²⁹ Howse, K. (1999) *Religion, spirituality and older people*, London: Centre for Policy on Ageing

³⁰ Coleman, P. Religious attitudes among British Older people: stability and change in a 20 year longitudinal study. *Ageing and Society* 24 (2004) p167 ff

³¹ Knox, I. (2002) *Older People and the Church*, London: T & T Clark

³² Light, M and O'Brien, O. Ministering with and to Older People in *Practical Theology 4.1* (2011)

³³ Hawkins, G and Parkinson, C. (2007) *Reveal: Where are you?* Willow Creek, p 33

- ³⁴ MacKinlay, E. (2006) *Spiritual Growth and Care in the Fourth Age of Life*, London: Jessica Kingsley p.70
- ³⁵ Board of Social Responsibility (1990) *Ageing* London:CHP
- ³⁶ Woodward,,J (2008) *Valuing Age*, London:SPCK p 132
- ³⁷ Morisy, A. (1987) *'The contribution of adult education and the Christian tradition to healthy aging'*. Unpublished dissertation:
- ³⁸ J Harris : *The great of pilgrimage of discovery* CCOA
- ³⁹ Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, *The Spirituality of Age*, CCOA
- ⁴⁰ Woodward, J (2008) op cit p 189 - see also Woodward, J. (2011) in *Practical Theology* Vol 4.1
- ⁴¹ Merchant,R. (2003) Op cit p 130
- ⁴² Jewell, A. (2001), p 116
- ⁴³ Barley, L (2006) *Chrishian Roots, Contemporary Spirituality*, London: CHP
- ⁴⁴ Jewell,A (2001) op cit , p 97
- ⁴⁵ Bianchi, E Living with Elder Wisdom, in *The Way* (1966)
- ⁴⁶ Atchley, R (2009) op cit p 148
- ⁴⁷ Rupp, J. (1996) *Dear Heart, Come Home: The path of midlife spirituality*, New York: Crossroad
- ⁴⁸ Rohr, R. (2011), *Falling Upwards*, San Francisco:Joosey-Bass
- ⁴⁹ Richard Rohr <http://evolutionarychristianity.com/blog/general/richard-rohr-falling-upward-a-spirituality-for-the-two-halves-of-life/> (accessed 04.06.2011)
- ⁵⁰ Jung, C 'The stages of Life' (1960), quoted in J. Walker, unpublished paper on building learning congregations (2000)
- ⁵¹ Rohr, R (2011) *Falling Upward: A spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*, ,San Francisco: Joosey-Bass
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- ⁵³ Jacobs, M.(1988), *Towards the Fullness of Christ*, London: DLT pp47-60
- ⁵⁴ Westerhoff, J H (1976) *Will our children have faith?*, Seabury Press ((2000 edition, Toronto:Morehouse Publishing)
- ⁵⁵ MacKinlay, E. The spiritual dimension of ageing in Jewell (ed) 2004 : *Ageing, spirituality and well-being*
- ⁵⁶ MacKinlay, E (2006) op cit 125-6
- ⁵⁷ Mickler ,C. and Staudinger, U. Personal Wisdom: Validation and Age-Related Differences of a Performance Measure in *Psychology and Aging* Vol 23 No 4, 2008
- ⁵⁸ MacKinlay E (2006) op cit p 73 (quoting earlier work in 2001)
- ⁵⁹ Atchley, R (2009), op cit, p 75
- ⁶⁰ J Woodward (2008) op cit p 141
- ⁶¹ Atchley, R. (1999) op cit, p xii
- ⁶² Missinne, L. The search for meaning of life in older age, in Jewell, A (2004) op cit p 122
- ⁶³ E.g. MacKinlay, E (2006) op cit p 36-7

D. EMERGING ISSUES

- ⁶⁴ Morisy, A.(2011) *Borrowing from the Future*, Continuum, London
- ⁶⁵ Stott, J (2010) *The Radical Disciple*, Nottingham:IVP, p 103 - 113
- ⁶⁶ Archbishops Council: (2006) *Shaping the Future*, London:CHP
- ⁶⁷ Knox,,I. (2002) op cit P 198
- ⁶⁸ Atchley, R (2009) , *Spirituality and Aging*, Baltimore:John Hopkins University Press
- ⁶⁹ <http://www.stedmundsbury.anglican.org/index.cfm?page=social.content&cmid=67#l>
- ⁷⁰ W Tyler (1978) *The Educational Needs of the Elderly* : Unpublished M Phil thesis, University of Nottingham
- ⁷¹ Yvonne Craig in *The Bridge* (Southwark Diocesan Newspaper) March 2011
- ⁷² Woodward,J. The Spirituality of Older People, in *Practical Theology 4.1* (2011) p. 90
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- ⁷⁵ Light M. And O'Brien O (2011) op cit p 20
- ⁷⁶ Atwell, R. (2011) *The Contented Life*, Norwich: Canterbury Press
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- ⁷⁸ E.g See <http://d-word.co.uk/resources.aspx> (accessed 22.07.11)
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⁸² MacKinlay, E (2006) *Spiritual Growth and care in the fourth age of life*, London:Jessica Kingsley , p 199ff