My field education experience at Antoine Craves senior citizen's center

Reginald C. Carter
Interdenominational Theological Center

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MY FIELD EDUCATION EXPERIENCE
AT ANTOINE GRAVES SENIOR
CITIZEN'S CENTER.

1967 Project Report
April 15, 1967

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the

Master of Religious Education Degree

by

Reginald C. Carter
OUTLINE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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* Indicates a change in page numbers.
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Grateful appreciations are extended to Mrs. Naomi Ernst who was instrumental in arranging this field work placement with the responsible instructors at the Interdenominational Theological Center. Her time and effort given toward helping me to learn about and understand the aged person and making voluminous suggestions in connection with this paper is gratefully appreciated.

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who gave me assistance in correcting grammatical errors found in this paper's final draft.

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INTRODUCTION

The writer of this paper was employed by the Atlanta Recreation Department as a Community Recreation Leader. His assignment was to establish a recreational program for Senior Citizens at the Antoine Graves Senior Citizens' Center. This was the first time the writer had an opportunity to work with the group.

There was a program already established for the group by the Senior Citizen Services of Metropolitan Atlanta. Mrs. Naomi Ernst was at the time of my employment the program director.

The writer had only worked for the Atlanta Department of Recreation for four months - commencing in April and continuing through August, 1966 at which time he was hired by Senior Citizen Services as assistant program director. From the month of April through December 31, the writer got to know something about the Senior Citizen, his problems and needs. The writer's duties consisted in helping to bring community programs into the Antoine Graves Senior Citizens' Center that would meet some of the needs of Senior Citizens and to give whatever assistance necessary to continue the work of present programs in the center.

One of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Religious Education at the Interdenominational Theological Center is field education. Two semesters are required in teaching and two in
administration. In consultation with Mrs. Ernst and the authorities at the Interdenominational Theological Center, arrangements were made for my field education for both teaching and administration at Antoine Graves Senior Citizens' Center. The writer spent three months engaged in field education experiences at Antoine Graves.

With the curtailment of available funds my services with Senior Citizen Services were terminated. This brought to an abrupt end my field education experiences at this center. It also meant the temporary end of my employment with remuneration. The writer had to seek another job. Fortunately for him, he was able to get a job at Morris Brown College as dormitory director in the Student Union Building. In order to continue his semester's requirement for field education experiences, arrangements were made with the college minister of Morris Brown College for the writer to teach a Sunday School class and direct the activities of the Inspirational Services Committee. During the change the writer lost several weeks of actual practice in field education. At the time of the writing of this final draft the writer is engaged in both the teaching and administrative work at Morris Brown College.

In the shift from Antoine Graves to Morris Brown College the writer has come in contact with two contrasting age groups in his field education experiences. At Antoine Graves he worked with Senior Citizens in both a teaching and an administrative situation. At Morris Brown College he is dealing with young adult groups.
The focal point of this "project report" is centered upon the writer's activities and experiences at Antoine Graves Senior Citizens' Center. Before attempting to report on the teaching and administrative experiences at Antoine Graves, the writer will give brief statements concerning the Senior Citizen. He shall first deal with who the Senior Citizen is, then comment briefly on his religious needs.
PART I

WHO THE SENIOR CITIZEN IS

The Senior Citizen is the current term used to refer to "older persons." He is characterized by growing "old" chronologically, physically, mentally, and emotionally. He is also referred to as "the aged," an "old person," or an 'older American.'

The Senior Citizen is described more succinctly by the study entitled, *The Older American.* This study states that the Senior Citizen is one who:

- may be between 65 and 70 but is probably not; who may be working but is unlikely; who may have a high school education but probably doesn't; who may be in good health but probably isn't; who may not receive social security but probably does; who would like to have more to do but the opportunities do not exist; who may collect a private pension but probably doesn't; who may have adequate health insurance but probably doesn't; who may live alone but probably not. ¹

From the above statement it can be seen that age alone does not fully describe the Senior Citizen. To be sure, aging is a factor.

¹

In case of the Senior Citizen, he has gone through that period of life when his physical and mental capacities show signs of decline.

The Senior Citizen is one who is climbing up hill in age and going down hill in health. Physiological degeneration accompanies old age. The degenerating process may be more rapid in some aged persons than in others depending on many factors. Some of these factors have been discussed by the study just referred to. One of them is the rising medical and hospital cost and the inability of the aged to pay from his low income. Another factor is the unknown causes and cures of chronic diseases which plague him. A delay on the part of the aged to visit a physician before it is too late could be considered as another factor. An unawareness of the need for medical check-ups, the dangers of self-doctoring, and methods of preventing accidents are some of the most common factors found among the aged. Still there are others such as self-pride which refuses to accept charity, fear of hospitals, poor food fads, habits and diets. The aged person does not like eating alone. For this reason he takes less interest in eating which is still another health factor. Frequent accidents contribute to poor health of the aged. Of these factors mentioned there is one which embraces them all - slow and insufficient health programs for the aged on the local, state, and Federal Government levels.

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1 Ibid., p. 12.
Turning from the health factor to the economic condition we see some of the following: the Senior Citizen is either retired or lives under the fear of retirement. His retirement may mean dependence upon others - such as charitable institutions and family. During the time he was employed he may not have saved enough to meet retirement needs. He may not be covered by social security. If he is, usually the income is inadequate even for a modest budget. Lack of adequate income may force him to sell his home and relocate. He may become frustrated when he realizes that he is forced to live on less income than what he had been accustomed.

Observations disclose the living conditions to be varied depending on several factors such as economic, social, cultural, educational, and health conditions. The Senior Citizen which this paper has in mind belongs to that group whose status reflects a lower level of the above factors. These are the people the writer came in contact with at Antoine Graves. There is a cross section of standards found in the living conditions among this group.

Family relationships often create problems for the aged. Some may be forced to live alone. Others may have to live with their offspring which the aged and the offspring may find to be uncomfortable. The two or three generations involved usually live in different worlds. Either situation forces the aged to withdraw into loneliness. These conditions also may enhance feelings of independence but more often produce feelings of dependence which they resent.
PART II

THE RELIGIOUS NEEDS OF SENIOR CITIZENS

In order to understand the religious needs of Senior Citizens in general, the writer begins by quoting some insights made by Paul B. Maves:

Religion has a relation to aging because it involves a response to the experience of aging, change, loss, and death. . . . A concern to find the ultimate meaning in these processes and to ascertain the significance of human life. . . . A particular kind of total response which we may call 'faith,' 'if it is one of confidence, basic trust, and commitment; 'agnosticism, 'if it is one of sustained doubt and detachment; 'stoicism, 'if it is one of resolute endurance in the face of an impersonal and uncovered universe; or 'cynicism, 'if it is one of suspicion, hostilities and withdrawal. It colors not only the way of looking at the process of aging and those who are aged, but also the way of responding to them. Religious faith and activity may be the way a man can assure himself of his continued worth in spite of the losses and disabilities wrought by aging.  

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To the view of Paul B. Maves on the role of religion and the aging should be added the statement of Milton L. Barron's four functions of religion in the aging process. He holds "that religion's gerontological task is essentially..."

1. To help face impending death.
2. To help and maintain a sense of meaningfulness and significance in life.
3. To help accept the inevitable losses of old age.
4. To help discover and utilize the compensatory values that are potential in old age."  

To these views, the writer would like to suggest four religious needs of Senior Citizens as he has observed them at Antoine Graves Senior Citizens' Center.

First and foremost is their need for a continuous Christian ministry. From what has been said about the Senior Citizen, who he is, his declining health, and economic deprivation, he also feels a deep yearning for religious leadership.

The second need is for both corporate and individual worship. Paul Brown says worship offers them guidance through the unknown of the remaining years. It also comforts and strengthens the

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Senior Citizen. The chief element in the worship service at Antoine Graves Senior Citizens' Center is preaching. A worship service was one of the first activities requested by this group when the center first opened.

The third need that the writer observed is the need for fellowship. Fellowship establishes a right relationship with one another. It breaks down loneliness and makes the Senior Citizen feel he has something in common with his neighbors. This need was very much manifested at Antoine Graves Senior Citizens' Center. In working with the group, the programs did seem to give them something to look forward to. The fellowship programs helped to break down self-centeredness. They also helped to build up the right kind of inter-personal relationships.

Senior Citizens want to be useful. They want to continue serving as they have been. They do not care to accept the idea that they are no longer useful. They relish the idea of being able to participate in worthwhile religious activities of a social welfare nature.

These are some of the religious needs of Senior Citizens especially at Antoine Graves. They expressed a desire for religious activities. Special permission was granted by the Atlanta Housing Authority to hold religious services in the high-rise building. Mrs. Naomi Ernst sought out personnel and arranged an initial Bible study program.
The writer's field education project was designed to provide an opportunity for him to get practical field work experiences. At the same time working with this group gave the writer an opportunity to help meet some of the needs discovered within this group in two specific ways: One is through teaching. That is to say, the writer revived the Bible class which had been discontinued due to poor attendance. The other was through administrative activities. This consisted mainly of giving leadership to the total program of the varied kinds of worship services. The remaining portion of this paper will be reports of the writer's activities as teacher and director of religious activities at the center. Due to the incompleteness of his teaching and administrative activities at Morris Brown College, the writer has not included this phase of work in this particular project report.
The writer had a two-fold purpose in mind when he accepted his teaching assignment at Antoine Graves Senior Citizens' Center. One was the practical application of some of the insights gained in classes at the Interdenominational Theological Center. The other was to assist in meeting the religious needs of the tenants at Antoine Graves.

During the two years spent at the Interdenominational Theological Center the writer had courses in the study of the Bible, Church History and Theology. These subjects dealt more or less with the content of the Christian faith. The writer also had courses that came under the heading of The Ministries of the Church. Within this group of courses were subjects of a practical nature like Psychology of Religion. Subjects of Christian Education included Program Building for Children-Adolescents and Adults, Curriculum in Christian Education and Leadership Education.

The writer gained rich insights from all of these courses. He will not attempt to describe the various types of insights gained from all of these. Some of the ideas which came immediately to the writer's mind which he had to use in his teaching and administrative work were: First was the objective of Christian Education, a statement of which follows:
The objective for Christian Education is that all persons be aware of God through his self-disclosure, especially his redeeming love as revealed in Jesus Christ, and that they respond in faith and love... to the end that they may know who they are and what their human situation means, grow as sons of God rooted in the Christian community, live in the Spirit of God in every relationship, fulfill their common discipleship in the world, and abide in the Christian hope. 1

This statement of objective helped me to see clearly what I ought to attempt as a teacher. It also served as a guide in my preparation for teaching and in my class sessions.

Another idea gained was what is termed the "learning tasks" in Christian Education. A statement of these made by the Cooperative Curriculum Project of the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches is:

- Listening with growing alertness to the gospel and responding in faith and love
- Exploring the whole field of relationships in light of the gospel
- Discovering meaning and value in the field of relationships in light of the gospel
- Appropriating personally the meaning and value discovered in the field of relationships in the light of the gospel
- Assuming personal and social responsibility in light of the gospel. 2

2 Ibid., p. 33.
These learning tasks apply to all ages... children, youth, and adults. They describe the learning process. They also shed light on the way the objective of Christian Education is to be achieved.

As I assumed teaching duties at Antoine Graves I sought to apply these learning tasks to the Senior Citizens who constituted the resurrected Bible class which I taught. In the attempt to apply the principles of the learning tasks to this adult group I discovered that I had to take under consideration the emotional and intellectual factors of my pupils, who, as I have indicated, were members of the older adult group. I realized that the techniques I would use with them had to be different from those techniques I would use with a class of children or youth. For example, I could not successfully make homework assignments. I had to use selective methods of getting them to explore and discover the meaning of the gospel.

I used the following eight different methods of approach in my teaching procedure. They are:

1. The direct question and answer
2. The buzz session
3. The use of religious films combined with buzz sessions
4. The demonstration followed by the discussion
5. The lecture
6. The brainstorming combined with the buzz session and discussion
7. The role-playing combined with the round table discussion
8. The impromptu debate followed by the discussion

In this report I have included four samples of methods used.
TEACHING PROCEDURE AND EVALUATION

(Question and Answer Method)

October 5, 1966

I. Lesson Planning: Essential Elements

A. Personal Spiritual Preparation:

The leader prayed for God's presence and guidance in the group. He studied the Bible and other materials in preparation for this session.

B. Aims or Objectives:

General: To find out what each individual believes religion is.
Specific: To establish rapport within the group; to find the best area of concentration to begin a Bible Study.

C. Activity to be Used:

1. Questions and Answers
2. Discussion

D. List of Key Questions:

1. How would you define religion?
2. What is the Bible?
3. Why do you read it?
4. Do you believe every word it says?
5. Where did you first learn of it?
6. What do you wish to learn?

II. Report of Class Session:
A. Number of pupils present: 30

B. Method of Procedure:

The session was scheduled for 7 P.M. The attendance grew at intervals. This was the first session since the Bible group had been discontinued three or four months before. It seemed as though everyone was waiting to see who or how many would attend.

With four members present the leader led them in singing familiar hymns until others arrived. As other members came leadership in singing was taken over by them. One of the members testified under free will which was indicative of the "ole prayer meeting" tradition prevalent in the group. An opening prayer was also given by a member of the group at the suggestion of the leader.

Each member, except one or two, brought his own Bible. The leader complimented them on their interest and initiative. He read Ecclesiastes 3:1-22. Some, wanting to read along with the leader, asked where to find the passage in the Bible. Here, the leader learned about the unfamiliarity of the group with the Bible. There were some who could not read. The leader did not exploit or play upon this weakness. Those persons who asked where the Book of Ecclesiastes was found were given assistance.

The Bible and the chalkboard were the only teaching aids used.

Near the end of the session the question was asked: What did Jesus mean by "let the dead bury the dead?" The group accepted this question as the topic for their next week's assignment.

The group adjourned with the benediction. Everyone shook hands in fellowship before leaving.

For the next session, the leader recommended:

1. That each member bring factual information regarding the history and significance of the assigned Bible passage.

2. That the group be divided into panels. Each panel member should study the meaning of the Scriptural passage.
3. That each panel should select a captain to lead them in discussions.

4. That each minister in the group should circulate among the panels to act as the teacher's helpers.

5. That each panel be given ten minutes to state its findings.

III. Evaluation:

The general aim of the lesson plan was accomplished. Most of the group members agreed that religion is: love, salvation, re-birth, guidance and life. Only a few members differed that religion is love.

The first portion of the specific aim was accomplished. The leader saw good group relationship manifested. The class responded well toward each other and toward the leader. They respected each other's opinions and ideas. They contributed freely in the discussion. At first, however, the leader sensed in some a reticence to speak out. The leader made known the importance of sharing views. He told them that it helps the group to understand each other better, and to grow in a learning experience for all. This he hoped would be accomplished within the Bible study group.

It was not possible to find a set area of concentration for beginning a Bible study. The questions asked in this session brought out doctrinal ideas which the leader did not want from the class. The group, in its traditional nature, leans toward fundamentalism. It seemed unwise to challenge any views. The leader accepted them and attempted to give those persons who gave unrelated views a feeling that their contribution was worthwhile. This approach helped to stimulate group participation but did not accomplish the leader's specific objectives.

There was a minister in the group who was an extreme "fundamentalist." The ability to transfer the meanings of the Bible to life situations met him with a challenge. Often he missed the main ideas of the discussions. He seemed to have had a challenging attitude toward the leader.

He used the Bible as his weapon. Also, it appeared that this attitude was an attack of age versus youth. This case was handled calmly by asking the minister to speak authoritatively on certain points. This approach seemed to be a good one. It gave the minister the recognition he sought.
The session was a wonderful experience for the leader. He felt that he, as well as the group, learned a great deal.
I. Lesson Planning: Essential Elements

A. Theme: "Candidates for Discipleship"

B. Topic: "Coming - Presently"

C. Scripture: Matthew 8:1-22

D. Personal Spiritual Preparation:

The leader studied the Bible and other materials in preparation for this session. The leader prayed for God's presence and guidance in the group.

E. Aims or Objectives:

General: To get the group involved in working together as a unit.

Specific: To create an atmosphere of "free expression" and to stimulate participation of each member within the group.

F. Activity to be Used:

1. A Buzz Session

2. A Discussion

G. Teaching Aids to be Used:

1. The Bible

2. The Chalkboard


H. List of Key Questions:
1. What do you think Jesus meant when He told a certain man to "let the dead bury the dead?"

2. What would a question like this mean to you today?

II. Report of Class Session

A. Number of pupils present: 35

B. Condition of room or setting:

The room was arranged in a semi-circle consisting of thirty seats. The leader sat in the middle of the circle. The chalkboard was behind him.

C. Method of Procedure:

The leader opened the Bible Class at 7 P.M. with about six participants present. The crowd increased throughout the entire session.

The group was led in familiar songs by the leader, followed by a prayer. He stated the theme, "Candidates for Discipleship," and the topic, "Coming - Presently," and wrote them on the chalkboard. He asked the group to define the terms "Candidate" and "Discipleship" in their own words. They offered such definitions for candidates as "someone chosen or selected for office" and "someone who follows" for discipleship. They were asked to keep their definitions in mind during the Scripture reading.

The leader read the Scripture from Matthew 4:18-22 as it relates to keeping with the theme and from Matthew 8:1-22 as it relates to the topic. Emphasis was placed on the words "immediately" and "followed." After having read the Scripture, the leader asked the group what they felt the statement in Matthew 8:22, "But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead," meant to them. He asked them to sing "Where He Leads Me." This was followed by the reading of the poem, "In His Steps." He then asked the class to assemble themselves into groups of five (there were 25 present at this time). The groups were to discuss among themselves what the Scripture meant to them and present an answer after eight minutes. (This time had to be extended due to some who came in late. The leader wanted to involve them in the program).
The leader asked two of the ministers in the group - members of the Religious Service Committee - to assist him by floating between each group to stimulate participation. One minister stated he didn't feel well and, therefore, did not participate. The other minister who did participate was found giving answers to the groups. This caused some disturbance by some members. The leader had to interpret the minister's role and restate the group's function.

The class was reassembled. Each group had chosen a spokesman to give its interpretations. They all felt Jesus was referring to the man who is "spiritually dead."

The leader pointed out the continuity of thought coming from each group. He attempted to show them the relevance the statement has for Christians today. Other interpretations were given which were in harmony with the group's as well as the leader's.

The leader asked if there were different interpretations. There were none.

The leader announced the program for next week and closed with the song "Where He Leads Me." Remarks were made by the Program Director and the two ministers of the group. The benediction was given.

III. Evaluation:

A harmonious and warm relationship existed within the members of the group. A high spirit of participation seemed to have been the keynote in which the session was closed. After the session, there was spontaneous fellowshipping and fraternizing unmarked by any motivation or encouragement from the leader.

Two members of the group, a man and a woman, did not participate in the buzz sessions. In a discussion afterwards, the woman said she "came to learn" what Matthew 8:22 means and the man said "his leg was hurting and he could not participate."

The leader feels that the session was a good one. He does feel that he can improve the session by more relaxation and less self-projection. He feels that some learning on the part of the group was evidenced by the comments they made about the lesson after the session was terminated.
TEACHING PROCEDURE AND EVALUATION

(Demonstration Method)

October 26, 1966

I. Lesson Planning: Essential Elements

A. Theme: "Purposeful Living"

B. Topic: "Helping Each Other in the Christian Life"

C. Scripture: Matthew 5:1-16

D. Personal Spiritual Preparation:

The leader went into fifteen minutes of private meditation before attempting to teach lesson. He sought guidance for approaches toward this endeavor. He read the Bible and other resource material that would be helpful in teaching.

E. Aims or Objectives:

General: To show how the Word of God becomes effective when communicated by each Christian.

Specific: To show how this particular passage is made applicable in everyday living.

F. Activity to be Used:

1. A Demonstration

2. A Discussion

G. Teaching Aids to be Used:

1. The Bible

2. Candles

3. Chalkboard

H. List of Key Questions:
1. What does this Scriptural passage say to you?

2. What do you think it says to others?

3. To whom did Jesus address these words?

4. In what ways can we show our light?

II. Report of Class Session:

A. Number of pupils present: 35

B. Condition of room or setting:

The room was arranged in two semi-circular rows, having twenty seats each. The leader sat in the center of the two rows and the chalkboard was somewhat behind him.

C. Method of Procedure:

The leader and the group read the Scripture (Matthew 1-16) responsively. He emphasized the following phrases taken from the Scripture: "Salt," "light," "a city on a hill," "a lamp on a lamp stand." These phrases were written on the chalkboard and the class was asked to think of the personal meaning of each phrase. During this time the theme and topic were stated and explained by the leader. They were discussed in light of the understanding of each member of the class. After having reached unification of terms, the class discussed the phrase emphasized. The leader then gave his interpretations based on the teachings of Jesus pointing out the Christian's duties in "Purposeful Living" and in "helping each other in the Christian life."

The leader involved the group in a demonstration that he hoped would make clear the Christian's responsibility in keeping with the theme and topic under discussion.

The lights in the room were turned out to assure complete darkness. The statement "I am a Christian, may I help you to become a Christian?" was whispered in the ears of the first person on the first row. Then the leader lit her candle. She in turn was to follow this procedure for the person next to her until everyone had received the message and had his candle lit. The last person receiving the message would convey it to the class.
The demonstration was to show (1) that Christians must help others to become Christians and by doing so the whole world would be lighted; (2) that the Word of God passed on can run the danger of misinterpretations; (3) that Christians must not only be hearers of the word, but also doers of it; and (4) that by doing those things mentioned above, they will become "the light of the world."

The leader announced that Dr. Melvin Watson, Instructor at the Interdenominational Theological Center, would teach the class next session.

The group adjourned with the benediction.

III. Evaluation:

The demonstration showed: (1) that the word was not communicated correctly by the class; (2) that they did not follow instructions; and (3) that the word of God was not conveyed due to the factors mentioned above.

A great deal of activity and involvement was exemplified in the entire class. The class responded in a healthy manner. Most members discussed freely. Enthusiasm and interests were high, and freedom of expression spontaneous. The ideas expressed showed very little training in interpretative thinking.

This lesson went over quite well. Another session similar to this one would help both the leader and the group. Active participation tended to produce a readiness to learn and stimulated interest within the group.
TEACHING PROCEDURE AND EVALUATION

(Imprintu Debate)

December 28, 1966

I. Lesson Planning: Essential Elements

A. Theme: "Purposeful Living"

B. Topic: "A Standard For Life"

C. Scripture: John 12:42-50

D. Personal Spiritual Preparation:

The leader prayed for insight, wisdom, and guidance to teach this lesson and that the spirit of God dwell in all to bring about right standards for life.

E. Aims or Objectives:

General: To show that to obtain Christian ethics is a purpose to live.

Specific: To show what is meant by Christian ethics or a standard for life and how it relates to our own lives, problems, and decisions we face.

F. Activity to be Used:

1. An impromptu debate
2. An informal discussion

G. Teaching Aids to be Used:

1. Chalkboard
2. Bible

H. List of Key Questions:

1. Is what you believe more important than what you do?
2. Is what you do more important than what you believe?
II. Report of Class Session:

A. Number of pupils present: 13

B. Condition of room or setting:

The classroom was prearranged having fifteen chairs placed in two crescent shaped sections to seat two debating teams. The chalkboard faced the group in the center of the two sections.

C. Method of Procedure:

The leader led the class in its regular devotional service. The topic and theme were discussed. The class shared in the discussion. It was divided into two groups to compose the debating teams. The activity was explained to them. Each team was given a statement to defend, and to select a captain who would present its argument. Ample time was given to gather arguments for the team's positions. Then each team reassembled later.

During the open discussion, each group presented and defended its positions. After the discussion, the leader gave a summary of the lesson. The session was adjourned.

III. Evaluation:

The class shared in a new learning experience. Not everyone became involved in the impromptu debate, but there was, on the whole, more group participation during the buzz session by the group. However, everyone responded in a way that seemed to indicate the impromptu debate was enjoyed. The dominant personality figures presented the defenses for its group. Some members of both groups "changed horses" by agreeing with the opposing team. The class went beyond the class' scheduled hour due to its involvement and participation. The members asked for a similar session the next time.

The leader was pleased to see the involvement of the group which the informal debate presented. Since there were some who did not verbally participate, and since the activity did seem to have good motivating possibilities for group participation and interaction, the leader decided to use it again for the next session.
PART IV

FIELD EDUCATION IN ADMINISTRATION

I now turn from field education in teaching to that of adminis-
tration. This field education experience was performed with a group
of Senior Citizens who acted as a Religious Service Committee. Their
purpose was to provide the religious programs for 244 Senior Citizens
living in the Antoine Graves Senior Citizens' Center.

The nature of my assignment was to give constructive guidance
and leadership education to an unorganized and unstructured group of
Senior Citizens who formed themselves into a body for the purpose of
conducting "church services." With the Committee, I helped to plan
religious programs and activities that would have meaning and signi-
ficance to the aged worshiper. My roles as a leader were the fol-
lowing:

1. Help the Religious Service Committee plan church
services for the Senior Citizens at the center and find
ways of building up the attendance at the services.

2. Introduce the Committee members to community re-
sources where they might gather new ideas for the services.

3. Help the Committee through program planning to meet
some of the needs expressed by Senior Citizens who wanted
religious services.

4. Support the Committee in its program of Christian
leadership education.

5. Hold weekly evaluative sessions with the Committee.
6. Hold personal consultations concerning programs with Committee members, and

7. Stimulate within Committee members the desire to learn and grow through gaining new ideas, developing a conducive atmosphere and proper exposure.

In this section I have included several samples of my administrative activities. Two of these samples illustrate my work with the Religious Service Committee. The third deals with my observation and evaluation of a religious service under the auspices of the Religious Service Committee.
WORK WITH THE RELIGIOUS SERVICE COMMITTEE

October 4, 1966

I. Planning Leadership Activity: Essential Elements

A. Personal Spiritual Preparation:

The leader prayed that God would help him to lead and direct the Committee into a learning and worshipping experience through these meetings and that through all of us God's purpose would become known.

B. Objectives of Session:

General: To help the Religious Service Committee find ways of building up the attendance at the religious services.

Specific: To evaluate the previous program presented by the Committee and to plan a program for the next time.

II. Report of the Session:

A. Leadership principle followed -- Democratic

B. Order of the Day:

The meeting opened with a song and prayer. From this point the leader asked what the Committee thought their last church service offered. Everyone felt the program went over well and that the group enjoyed the service. The Committee further discussed the program. A minister suggested that the Committee should talk the church service up more, and that it should reach out into the community to invite ministers who have churches to speak for the group. The leader felt the suggestion was good and wondered how the other members of the Committee felt about it.

Another minister wanted to know if some provisions would be made to pay for visiting ministers' services. The question was received well by the leader. He approached it with the comment that many participants in our services are members of churches in the community. This being true, some pastors having members with us may be glad to come and render service on a voluntary basis. The Committee agreed. The leader added that this point should be made clear when contacting the ministers.
The leader wondered about punctuality in regards to the program. This issue brought a great deal of controversy. Two Committee members insisted that the regular service should be preceded by a prayer service from 7:30 to 8 P.M. No one was designated to assume responsibility for it. One member suggested that the first person who gets to the center should take charge. The leader wondered about the leadership aspect of this suggestion, as well as the feasibility of good program planning. He pointed out how spasmodic group interest and participation may become in a program when a designated leader did not assume the responsibility of leadership. The danger of assuming someone would take charge would be running the risk of not having a program at all for that evening.

The leader continued: "The Committee should know who would take charge of any aspect of the program and the time schedule of it." In this way, the group would not be kept waiting until someone decided to show up. If the audience is interested in the program, and if they see it starting on time, they would make an all-out effort to come on time in order to become a part of the program. The Committee accepted these explanations. The problem became one of selecting a leader for the worship service.

After much discussion, the committee agreed that it would be best to adhere to punctuality for all programs and that someone should be present to start them. The period from 7:30 to 8 P.M. was set for devotion. One member of the Committee accepted the responsibility for devotion on Thursday, October 6, 1966. The meeting then adjourned.

III. Evaluation:

The Committee was stimulated to participate in the discussions. Their interest came out of their own concern for religion and its activities. Their participation was healthy, more so than at the last meeting. The individual and group goals sought were: to get the Committee to think seriously about establishing a cooperative relationship with other ministers in the community; to become cognizant of punctuality in programming; and to plan for the next program.

The leader feels all of the goals were met, however, somewhat undesirable in outcome.

The leader's strong points were: his ability to see himself projecting or driving the Committee into making hasty decisions in order to meet certain goals. At times, when he felt
himself becoming too authoritative, he was able to withdraw in order that the Committee might show some initiative.

The leader's weak points were: his impatience to obtain goals and his inability to work behind the group rather than in front of it.

The favorable points of the group were: its willingness to cooperate with each other and the decisions made by the Committee; its free participation in and sharing of feeling in discussions.

The unfavorable points of the group were: the members were not goal oriented; they lacked the educational background to understand values of program planning.
November 15, 1966

I. Planning Leadership Activity: Essential Elements:

A. Personal Spiritual Preparation:

The leader prayed that God would help him to lead and direct the Committee into a learning and worshipping experience through these meetings with them and that He would motivate us to carry out His will through the religious services.

B. Objectives of Session:

- General: To help the Committee to become goal oriented.
- Specific: To relinquish the role as Chairman of the group, evaluate last week's religious program presented by the Committee, and to help them plan the next one.

II. Report of the Session:

A. Leadership principle followed -- Democratic

B. Order of the Day:

The meeting was opened with devotions. Following this, the leader welcomed the members of the Committee. He stated that the Committee needed a chairman selected from its growing membership. The Committee members wanted the leader to remain as their chairman. To this wish the leader stated that he would prefer being a part of the Committee and in a capacity to offer suggestions, make comments and give assistance in any area rather than to act as chairman. The Committee accepted this explanation and elected one minister from the group as chairman and another as co-chairman.

The duties as chairman and co-chairman were discussed in light of the purposes and functions of the Religious Services Committee.

We went into our usual evaluative session. About the program last week, everyone thought it went well. One member
stated that he had no criticism about any phase of the program. He added: "We are all doing God's work and we cannot do wrong." Everyone else seemed to have been pleased at his remark.

The leader acquiesced only to the extent that God's work cannot fail. But he added the adage, God also helps those persons who help themselves. He wondered if we could risk feeling satisfied in doing just enough without asking ourselves if we could have done more and if so, how?

A new female member of the Committee grasped the idea. She gave what she felt could be an improvement for the prayer services. She needed a deacon to help her conduct these services.

The sister's suggestion led the group to decide to have the prayer services conducted by a male and a female together.

The leader made additional comments about the value of program planning and evaluation. He asked about this week's plans. His inquiry led to the discussion of getting one of two ministers named. The leader expressed doubt as to whether the last person named would accept the invitation to speak on so short a notice. On this point he warned the Committee.

The discussions then went off on a tangent. A member suggested the use of a room in the auditorium daily, and at all hours for anyone wishing to pray. The leader told the Committee that this would not be possible due to the fact that the auditorium is used during the day by other groups and that it, being in a federally housed building, serves multiple purposes. This discussion brought a suggestion from a member of the group about the use of his own apartment for service. Although the Committee members seemed interested, his suggestion was not workable.

The meeting adjourned.

III. Evaluation:

The group was stimulated and motivated by the leader who performed such functions as: (1) initiating goals, (2) summarizing, and (3) giving information.

There were no group goals, only the leader's goals. This fact is one of the reasons the leader relinquished his role as chairman. He wanted to see if the group would respond better to someone of their own peer group to an end that goals would
emerge. The leader felt he influenced the group to accept his goals if in no other way than verbally. However, this was not what the leader wanted out of this group. He wanted to see them functioning independently as a group, rather than to be manipulated as "guinea pigs."
OBSERVATION OF A RELIGIOUS SERVICE

In addition to my work with the Religious Service Committee, I made observations of the religious services which they conducted. Being present at the services put me in a position to aid the Committee in evaluating their religious services.

Below is an evaluation of a religious service conducted on November 17, 1966.

Observation Report: Attendance -- 39

The prayer service took its regular course by beginning with the devotion. In this activity, the people were given an opportunity to share singing, praying, and testifying. Their participation and involvement was unrestrained. The unstructured prayer meeting was followed by the regular church service. The speaker for the service was introduced by the Chairman of the Religious Service Committee.

The preacher spoke on the subject, "God Can Fix It." He did not follow any particular order of homiletical pattern, and his message was delivered extemporaneously which the audience caught. There were shouts of "Amen" as the minister spoke. He loosened his tie and the top button of his shirt. His delivery then took the form of "whooping" and gesticulation. Yet the people seemed to have enjoyed all of it. The preacher left the platform and continued
"whooping" until he ended his message. Then he led the people in singing "He's Allright," and extended an invitation to the people to join a church.

The services ended with the remarks by the chairman and two other ministers of the Religious Service Committee. The benediction was given.

Evaluation:

From my observation of this service, the people seemed to have been caught under some kind of spell when the speaker began to "whoop." They became wholeheartedly involved in either the speaker or the message. Whether the speaker or his message, the leader could not discern.

I feel that an attempt to strip this age group of this type of preaching and service, and replace it by one less emotional would be catastrophic. These types of services have been a way of life for these people. These services have been a saving element during mental, social, and economic depression. They point to faith originated in childhood, a means of expressing themselves to God. This pattern for life cannot run the risk of being broken for a new form. To do it would be like taking the remainder of their lives from them.

As the aged at Antoine Graves increase in age, they feel they are participating in a true worshipping experience with God, and
are having an encounter with Him. Also, living with a faith as long as they have, fear alone would make them hold on to it; fear of breaking a covenant with God; fear of not being saved and of not receiving everlasting life.

Emotionalism is a big part of the aged's religious experience at Antoine Graves and it will always be. The leader feels that he should provide the group with the experiences of other ministers who do not seek out so much of the overt emotion in his message, but he will not attempt to exclude the other extreme. As these aged were taught this religious service practice during the early years of their lives, an attempt at a complete change in their old age may prove to be spiritually detrimental.
CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have tried to show (1) who the Senior Citizen is, (2) some of his religious needs, and (3) the nature of my field education assignments, and how I, through them, tried to meet some of the religious needs of Senior Citizens at the Antoine Graves Senior Citizens' Center.

Age alone does not fully describe the Senior Citizen. To know him requires a knowledge of other factors about him such as his health, economic conditions, living conditions, and family relationships. The age factor does tell us more positively that the Senior Citizen is sixty-five or older. He is going up hill in age and may be going down hill in health. His living conditions vary. He may be living alone or with others. He may also be living in poverty or affluence.

The religious needs of Senior Citizens are pretty much the same. It is true that they need religion to help them (1) to face death, (2) to maintain a sense of meaningfulness in life, (3) to accept the inevitable losses of old age and to discover and utilize the compensatory values that are potential in old age. They also need (1) a continuous ministry as they face the inevitableness of old age and the problems that may come with it, (2) the strength and comfort which corporate and individual worship offer, (3) fellowship to combat loneliness, and (4) opportunities to be useful through continuous giving of their service.
The aged can fulfill the "learning tasks" in Christian education. It is a ridiculous statement to say that the aged cannot learn new religious concepts. At Antoine Graves, the aged learned their religion by rote. For some, inability to read, poor eyesight, and short retention spans are definite impediments to their learning. Nevertheless good teaching methods can help to overcome these handicaps and effect the five learning tasks. Good teaching methods are the keys toward learning.

It is the writer's opinion that the aged at Antoine Graves are already spiritually ready and involved in the process of fulfilling the learning tasks in Christian education. They can learn and become aware of them through active involvement, practical application, participation in worship, group discussion, and religious activities.

The writer found the buzz session method helpful in stimulating group participation and moving the aged closer toward the learning tasks. The buzz session method was used to involve the group reading, discussing, and interpreting the Bible. It seemed as though the aged persons at Antoine Graves were not accustomed to interpreting the Bible this way before. After repeated uses of the buzz session method, the group began to show signs of independent thinking about the Bible. They began to explore it and find new meanings for themselves from it. For those who could not read, they were able to participate in discussions about Scriptural passages in which there was some familiarity.
Another successful teaching method was the religious movie. This method has great potential for creating a worshipping and learning atmosphere for the entire group. However, the movies must be short and to the point in order for them to be effective. It is difficult and tiresome for the aged to sit through long movies. It is also difficult for him to remember in detail certain or important highlights of a long movie. Religious movies bring the aged religious enrichment as they see Biblical accounts of what they had learned about the Bible and its characters.

The role-playing technique can be considered a successful teaching method. It provided the aged with a learning opportunity to appropriate personally the meaning and value discovered in their field of relationships in light of the gospel. The writer was overwhelmed to see how meaningful this activity was to the group and the extent to which they wanted to participate in it.

The demonstration and impromptu debate methods are also good teaching instruments to use when teaching the aged and helping them through the learning tasks.

The writer is of the opinion that the direct questioning method, the lecture, and the brain-storming methods were less successful and effective with the aged. The reflexes of Senior Citizens at Antoine Graves are not alert enough to get the benefits that the direct questioning and the brain-storming methods may produce. The aged's short retention span prohibits the effectiveness of the lecture
method. They do not seem to become as personally involved when either the direct questioning, the brain-storming and the lecturing methods are used. They do not seem to provide the aged with a chance for inter-personal and inter-social relationships. The writer, using these methods as teacher, always had to project himself to get a response from the group.

The current teachings of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Christian education can and should be shared with Senior Citizens at the Antoine Graves Senior Citizens' Center in an effort to meet some of their religious needs. This "sharing" is made possible by the use of effective teaching methods. These methods which communicate help to bring the aged into a fulfillment of the learning tasks and the process by which he becomes involved in them meets some of his religious needs.

The field education in administration performed with the Religious Service Committee were fruitful experiences. In lieu of a conclusion about these experiences the writer will briefly tell what those results were.

When I first met the Religious Service Committee, there were only three members. They were conducting church services on every Thursday night. The average attendance to the services was fifteen. In order to provide leadership for the Committee I felt I had to assume responsibility as chairman. After several meetings with them I observed that I was not communicating as I had hoped. Before each
meeting I presented to the Committee an agenda. It reflected the
goals of the leader and not those of the Committee. The leader dis-
covered he was soliciting participation and involvement from the
group to reach his goals rather than those of the group. The leader
then decided to relinquish his role as chairman and give it to the
group. By doing this, the Committee would establish and work to-
ward the accomplishments of their own goals. The leader's role
then became one of an observer and a guide toward: (a) helping
the Committee establish their own goals; (b) helping them to discover
ways of moving toward and meeting their goals; and (c) giving advice
and suggestions for group maintenance.

Listed below are the results of my total field educational ex-
periences with the Religious Service Committee at Antoine Graves
Senior Citizens' Center:

1. The Religious Service Committee elected their
   own chairman and co-chairman.

2. The committee has grown in membership from
   three to ten.

3. The goals come from the group rather than the
   leader.

4. Some members of the Religious Service Committee
   visited and spent an entire day at the Interdenominational
   Theological Center.

5. The Church attendance has grown from an average
   of fifteen to an average of eighty.

6. The Church has at least three volunteers to
   act as ushers.

7. In the month of October, 1966, the Religious Service
Committee had invited guest speakers for the church services up to January 1, 1967, thus improving on the quality of speakers.

8. The leader at first would have to remind each committee member of the regular committee meeting, which he no longer has to do.

9. In committee meetings there exists more dialogue among the members than before.

10. The committee seems able to function on their own with a very able and dynamic chairman.

11. Added to the quality of the church services was a choir consisting of other senior citizens living in the building.

12. The committee has chosen from their group a courtesy committee whose function is to send out "thank you" letters to the guest ministers who volunteered their services as speakers for the church services.

The writer is not pleased to say that he did not fulfill all of the religious needs of the Senior Citizens at Antoine Graves. To meet all of them requires a continuous ministry. The need for strength and comfort which corporate and individual worship offers were being met through the Bible study classes, the church and prayer services. They also fulfilled the need for fellowship and provided opportunities for the aged to feel useful. In the church and prayer services the devotions, personal testimonies, and sermons seemed to give strength, courage, and renewed conviction to the aged about his religion. The aged at Antoine Graves served as he participated in these services as: (1) a minister, (2) a deacon or mother of the church, (3) a committee member, (4) an usher, (5) a choir director or member, (6) a piano player, (7) a soloist, or (8) a worshipper. Many of them were asked to give whatever food they could to help unfortunate
people through the Thanksgiving season during a special Bible class session. This group gave to others what they could not afford to give. But this giving helped them to feel useful.
RECOMMENDATIONS

This field work placement at Antoine Graves Senior Citizens' Center was a rich experience. There was a definite challenge to find out what actually could be done to help meet some of the religious needs of Senior Citizens. It was a challenge to learn what teaching methods are communicative and if there could actually be established a teaching-learning encounter with this age group. The experiences with this group were not challenges alone, but were also learning experiences for the writer and the group. Not only was there a chance to do the will of God which these experiences provided, but a chance to make recommendations for a continued ministry to those persons who are clergymen and who feel there is nothing left for the aged person.

To the clergymen, the laymen, and all the people of God, the writer wishes to make the following recommendations:

1. That the Interdenominational Theological Center continue the field education placement with Senior Citizens especially those at the Antoine Graves Senior Citizens' Center.

2. That the aged persons be given the advantages of a continuous ministry.

3. That the teaching methods I used be compared with others and tested to ascertain their usefulness in helping the aged person fulfill the learning tasks in Christian education.

4. That the next field education placement in administration be continued with the Religious Service Committee.
5. That a formal letter of thanks be sent by the Interdenominational Theological Center to the Program Director and Senior Citizens at the Antoine Graves Senior Citizens' Center for the opportunities they provided me in this placement.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

