ALOA
CELEBRATE AND SERVE!

ENCORE TIMES

THE ASSOCIATION OF LUTHERAN OLDER ADULTS JANUARY 1993

President Cites Urgent Need for New Ministry

"The churches may not yet realize it, but the time is surely ripe for ALOA to arrive on the scene."

With these words President Robert Zimmer addressed the Board of Directors of the Association of Lutheran Older Adults in its November meeting. President Zimmer was commenting on a report predicting that . . .

Zimmer

in 25 years:

*76 million who are now between 31 and 47 will be retiring;
*The number of persons over 85 will be multiplied by 5;
*The average American will live to be 75.

Noting that already now more than 30 percent of all Lutherans are over 65, Zimmer observed that the churches have not fully understood or adequately responded to this challenge. "To be sure," he said, "the churches have done remarkably well in establishing programs, agencies, and facilities to care for dependent aging persons. Since, however, more than 85 percent of persons over 65 live independently, more ways must be found to minister to persons with problems that attend our later years."

He noted that people nearing or past 50 with anticipated longer life spans may well encounter traumatic transition experiences from job loss, retirement, family changes, home-site displacement, and a host of other disruptions. He concluded, "ALOA's task is to help the Christian community to discern the purposes of God in change, to celebrate added years as a gift, and to discover new models for faithful service to our Lord and all our Lord's people."

ALOA Pilot Programs Set for 1993

Many older adults appreciate opportunities to travel, meet new friends, and find intellectual stimulation in informal study. Recognizing this interest, ALOA has developed a program that incorporates all of the above plus a spiritual dimension.

Seven **Faith Ventures in Learning** will be offered in 1993:

May 23-28	**Camp Lone Star, TX**
Jul 18-23	**Valparaiso University, IN**
Aug 21-26	**Camp Onamia, MN**
Aug 21-28	**Camp Arcadia, MI**
Sept 12-18	**Holden Village, WA**
Sept 13-16	**Ingham-Okoboji, IA**
Oct 3-8	**Son Rise Camp, NY**
Oct 11-15	**Lutheridge, NC**

ALOA will also pilot a second program, **Faith Ventures in Pilgrimage**. A tour led by Herb Brokering, Roger Franzen, and Dennis Kalow will visit East Europe sites July 2-16. In contrast to traditional tours, this program will provide opportunity for dialogue with people in these locales.

For more information on these programs write to **ALOA, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN 46383,** or call **(219) 464-6743.**

EXPERIENCED HANDS LAUNCH ALOA

Bergman

Haaland

Seeber

Otterness

In 1989 **Wheat Ridge Ministries** consulted with persons from different regions to draw on their expertise for shaping the structure and course for the ministry that has become the **Association of Lutheran Older Adults**. Lay and professional people experienced in issues affecting the aging participated in these sessions.

A group, gathered in March, 1991, completed refining of plans and now serves as **ALOA's Board of Directors**:

Douglas Fountain, a Lake Worth, Florida, pastor who recently earned a doctoral degree in aging;

William Heard, retired Chicago community college faculty member who serves with "Elders for Justice";

Lorraine Jordan, who finds volunteer opportunities for the aging in St. Louis;

Dale Meyer, St. Louis, who is speaker for the International Lutheran Hour with its large audience of older adults;

David Kruse, a Green Valley, Arizona, pastor who has developed innovative programs to involve retirees;

Helen R. Miller, of Topeka, who serves the LCMS Kansas District as staff person for ministry with the aging;

Walter Moris, of Gig Harbor, Washington, who recently retired from the administrator post at Columbia Lutheran Home, a long-term care facility in Seattle;

Marvin Schultz, San Angelo, who has been aiding the LCMS Texas District by cultivating ministries with the aging; and

Louise Shoemaker, sociologist, who chairs the University of Pennsylvania faculty and focuses on aging and family.

Board members who also serve as the **ALOA's Executive Committee** are:

President: Robert Zimmer, a pastor in Sarasota, Florida, who for years served as president of Wheat Ridge Ministries;

Vice President: Shirley Bergman, who is director of the Lutheran Institute on Aging and Family and adjunct member of the faculty at Concordia College in Seward, Nebraska;

Secretary: Chris Haaland of Albuquerque, who has been serving her synod as a lay member of programs with aging;

Treasurer: William Seeber, who is currently serving as deacon at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Valparaiso; and

Member at large: Omar Otterness of suburban Minneapolis, former professor at St. Olaf College. Prior to March 1, 1992, Dr. Otterness together with **Charles Mueller** of Roselle, Illinois, Wheat Ridge Ministries staff associate, shared the role of interim director for ALOA. Dr. Otterness also has accepted the responsibility for designing and launching several pilot programs for the Association.

GRANTS GO TO ALOA

It was **Wheat Ridge Ministries** which had supplied the original grant that brought into being the **Association of Lutheran Older Adults**. In reviewing ALOA's developments, Wheat Ridge found progress so encouraging that its Board has now authorized an additional grant for the second phase of ALOA's start-up. The major part of the Wheat Ridge grants has been allocated for organizational expenditures.

Subsequent gifts from individuals, **The Friendship Foundation**, **The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod**, and the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America** have been supporting ALOA's operations, its development of programs, and the issuing of its first printed communications to the church community.

Aid Association for Lutherans has announced a 1993 grant for engaging seven two-member teams. These Regional Volunteer Associates will provide presence for ALOA in different geographic sites, collaborating with ALOA's staff in developing and implementing programs appropriate to their locales.

CAN ONE MAINTAIN SELF-ESTEEM IN RETIREMENT?

The man who called was in his mid-fifties and he had a message for the Association of Lutheran Older Adults. He told of the experiences that were his as the firm for which he had worked for many years rather abruptly informed him that his position would be discontinued.

"When that happens," he said, "you realize that people don't know you for who you are as much as for what you do. You derive your identity from your job or your profession. When suddenly you have no job, you are a 'has been' at best and a 'nothing' at worst. At least that's how you feel.

"I didn't want to tell anyone what happened. I didn't want them to find out I had become a 'nothing.' It's hard to come out and say it. It seems so risky, because you're sure people will regard you as a failure, as if you were now found incompetent for the job. Yet trying to keep it to myself was the worst thing I could have done.

"Actually, people do understand. And when I started telling people about what had happened they were able to be supportive to me by helping me find other options for my life."

What this man experienced, many more have and countless more will.

What is called for is an understanding ear to expressions like this man's, and to realize that many more are in his situation who will not bare their hearts and share their deep hurts. The spoken or unspoken lament of anyone: "What ON EARTH -- right here, right now -- am I worth?!" is occasion for Christians to respond with a sincere manifestation of friendship and affirmation -- in the spirit and style of Jesus Christ.

WITH A WELCOME FOR ALL . . .

Hardly had the Association of Lutheran Older Adults moved into its new quarters when a phone caller inquired whether the term *"Lutheran"* in ALOA's name precluded participation in its programs by persons of other denominations. Since then, the question has been repeated.

More explicitly, an officer of a foundation, to which the Association had submitted a proposal for funding, asked, "Does the *'Lutheran'* in your organization's name intend to communicate the organization's services are accessible exclusively to Lutherans?"

The formal response prepared by ALOA's staff reads this way: ***"Although ALOA's ministry begins within the Lutheran community, both its board and staff are eager and ready to share its services with people of other denominations as well as with the unchurched, just as Lutheran congregations are prepared and eager to serve persons who may not be Lutheran."***

ALOA Produces Two Publications —

ENCORE for Workers in Ministry is mailed to all ELCA and LCMS clergy, other selected church workers, and any other persons requesting this bi-monthly publication. The first (winter) issue has already been distributed; however, there are still copies available for those making requests.

What you are reading now is the first issue of ***ENCORE TIMES***. This initial publication is being mailed to persons who have sent financial contributions for this ministry and others whose names were given us. Should you know of individuals who would welcome receiving a sample issue of ***ENCORE TIMES***, please send that person's name and address to ***ENCORE TIMES***, ***ALOA***, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN 46383.

ENCORE TIMES will normally be printed on four pages, published on alternate months.

PERSONS SENDING "FOUNDER" CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALOA WILL RECEIVE REGULAR MAILINGS OF *ENCORE TIMES*!

I am eager to support the founding of ALOA's ministry. Please enroll me as an

____ **ALOA Founding Partner**	*($1,000 or more)*	I am enclosing a check for $_____
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LUTHERAN CHURCH LEADERS AFFIRM ALOA

Upon hearing of ALOA's beginnings, long-time leaders in the Lutheran church community accorded the venture warm words of commendation. Among them:

Dr. Florence Montz, member of the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod: "For years sociologists have been predicting a phenomenal increase in numbers of older persons in our world. The promised day is here, and we in the church can be grateful for every ally to help us respond to this challenge with vigor and creativity. I am grateful that ALOA is coming into being 'for such a time as this'."

Dr. Ralph Bohlmann, past president of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod: "We church people need all the help we can find to attend to our ministry with the aging. The problems and opportunities before us are almost overwhelming. I am glad ALOA will be there to help us meet them faithfully and effectively."

Dr. Herbert Chilstrom, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: "Since the number of persons over age 50 is growing rapidly, it is welcome news that ALOA has appeared on the scene to help the church address issues relating to aging."

Dr. James Crumley, past president of the Lutheran Church in America: "ALOA's very motto, '**Celebrate and Serve**,' signals its readiness to help us in the churches to recognize the gift older adults are to us all and to find ways to engage more fully with them in ministry for our Lord and our Lord's people everywhere."

Dr. Will Herzfeld, past president of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches: "The young ones of today so very much need what the older persons of our Christian community have to share with them. The Lord must surely be pleased that ALOA has come into being to assist the church in attempting to involve all members of the Body of Christ in fuller ministry."

Dr. Oswald C. J. Hoffmann, Honorary Lutheran Hour Speaker: "More and more the church is just beginning to see and seize opportunities to meet the needs of the aging and to enlist these persons and their resources in support of the cause of Christ. Welcome to ALOA in its efforts to help make things happen!"

Dr. David Preus, past president of the American Lutheran Church: "ALOA obviously intends to recognize the experience, the talents, and the skill of the older members of God's family, and to ensure wise deployment of these in the total ministry and mission of God's people. It is gratifying and exciting to see such commitment, so deserving of our involvement and support."

Dr. Robert Marshall, past president of the Lutheran Church in America: "The problems of troubled peoples of this big world call for the best that the church can give at this time. If ALOA can combine the experience and wisdom of our older adults with the strength and energy of the younger members of the Christian community, its ministry is bound to prove a blessing."

CHURCHES MAINTAIN TIES WITH ALOA

Before plans for ALOA's ministry even crystallized, the founding committee invited staff persons from both the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to participate in the planning process.

In the finalizing of plans, it was decided that ALOA was to be a voluntary association, structurally independent of other organizations, but seeking to be in close association with the churches.

Since ALOA's formal formation, the two church bodies are maintaining close ties with the young ministry. ELCA has named **Ruth Reko** and **Jerry Olstad** to attend ALOA Board meetings. LCMS's Board of Human Care has designated the Reverend **Walter Schoedel** of St. Louis for a similar assignment. The arrangement assures two-way conversation and collaboration and also makes possible the replication of successful programs while minimizing duplication.

ENCORE TIMES

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TRANSITIONS AND MANY MORE PROBLEMS

As at all ages, persons nearing and past 50 can expect many kinds of transition periods in the years that lie before them. Some of these experiences confront them with unsettling -- sometimes devastating -- problems. These problems take different shapes and forms for different people. Probably no two persons anywhere experience such transitions and their attending problems in the same way.

For ALOA to claim to know what all the problems are, let alone have answers for them, would be presumptuous. In correspondence that has come to the ALOA office, people have told of problems they have encountered and in some instances have noted responses that might be helpful in certain situations.

Here are some of those comments:

"How do we minister to people who, since they have retired from their jobs, seem to believe it's also time to retire from the church?"

" . . . If we ask, 'Does the old music keep our young away,' can we also ask, 'Does the new music keep our older adults away?'"

"Once the glamour of being retired -- dinner and all -- wears off, what then?"

"Has it occurred to people that some folks withdraw because they do not hear as well anymore and simply do not wish to keep asking persons to repeat what they had been saying?"

"With less money I can't contribute as much, and with slower mobility I can't volunteer as much, but I can still find ways to do ministry for my Lord with people who serve me!"

" . . . Can't people over 50 come to know each other and find ways to support each other without getting together simply to be entertained?"

" . . . At night or in bad weather could youth park cars for older persons who drive up to the church or escort seniors to their cars?"

" . . . Some of our older members assist others with some of the paperwork associated with Medicare, pension, insurance, and tax forms."

"How do I deal with the accumulated losses of a lifetime, gain new purpose, and adjust for new possibilities?"

ALOA GETS NEW DIRECTOR AND NEW HOME

The organizing of ALOA and charting of its course were marked by months and months of careful and intensive study. When finally the fashioning of by-laws, the chartering, registering, and all other legal requirements were completed, ALOA was ready to engage its first full-time executive director. The Board elected the Reverend Karl E. Lutze to the position and he began serving on October 1st, 1992.

Pastor Lutze had retired from Valparaiso University in 1991 after serving on its theology faculty for 31 years. During part of that time he also had been Executive Director of the Lutheran Human Relations Association of America. In the last ten years he was the University's Director for Church Relations. Earlier, he had served as parish pastor for 15 years.

While ALOA's founders were still laying the ground work for the new ministry, Valparaiso University's President Alan Harre learned of their meetings and invited them to consider the possibility of establishing quarters on Valparaiso University's campus.

President Zimmer noted, "This generous offer of hospitality not only provides us with numerous advantages for our operations, but it also offers us immediate accessibility to many of the University's professional resources.

"And not least," he added in warm humor, "our new offices will be only four minutes from our executive director's home!"

IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO ATTEND THE

WALTHER LEAGUE 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

IN

CHICAGO

ON

MAY 21-24, 1993

PLEASE ACCEPT **ALOA'S** INVITATION TO VISIT OUR DISPLAY AND ATTEND A WORKSHOP CONDUCTED BY

KARL E. LUTZE, ALOA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ENTITLED:

"THE YOUTH FACTOR IN ADULTHOOD"

Lutze

What's in a Name?

Why 'Encore'?

After a great performance, the applauding audience will not let the performer leave. Still clapping their hands, they rise and shout "Encore! Encore! More! More! Again! Again!"

The artist does not leave the stage, but stays and continues the performance. The presentation might differ greatly from what has been the program to this point. However, this is the moment of focusing on the reservoir of the artist's talent.

The founders of the Association of Lutheran Older Adults see its ministry as celebrating God's performance in the lives of Christian people, recognizing their talents, skills, dedication, and achievements.

ALOA, in naming this publication "**ENCORE**," sees the adding of years as gift and signals its intention to cheer folk on to continue serving God in God's world with freshness, imagination, and excited joy.

Why 'Times'?

The addition of the name "**TIMES**" focuses on ***time*** as a gift of God to celebrate and to use well. It emphasizes that now is the ***time*** for drawing on the wisdom and experience of those who have survived in the face of overwhelming challenges, for teaming their gifts with the fresh insights and energies of the young for the sake of tomorrow's children and their children.

At the end of the street that crosses the great University of Chicago campus, a massive sculpture depicts ***Time*** as a robed and hooded figure beholding a procession of aged and young, all participants in the struggles of life. And these words are engraved in the pavement:

"Time goes, you say?
Ah, no,
Alas, time stays;
We go."

ALOA wishes to remember that and to use ***time*** well. Hence its bywords: *"Celebrate and Serve!"*

ENCORE TIMES

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