



Accompanying Later Life

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This Session

Later life/older age

- Being 50
- 44/60
- A relative term
- Third age and fourth age
- Finances

Accompaniment

- Accompanying our own, & others', ageing
- Develops mutual understanding
- Eudemonic wellbeing
- Models of Ageing – Pope; Queen

In the NHS and social care ... but probably for all of us

"Staff are dealing with their own ageing whilst also observing the ageing of their patients and the reaction to this of the relatives. None of this is particularly easy and spiritual practices seemed to help staff manage these complexities"

Mowat, H. (2007). Gerontological chaplaincy: The spiritual needs of older people and staff who work with them. *Scottish Journal of Healthcare Chaplaincy*, 10(1), 27-31.

Who's religious?

Mr David Nott

– war zone
surgeon

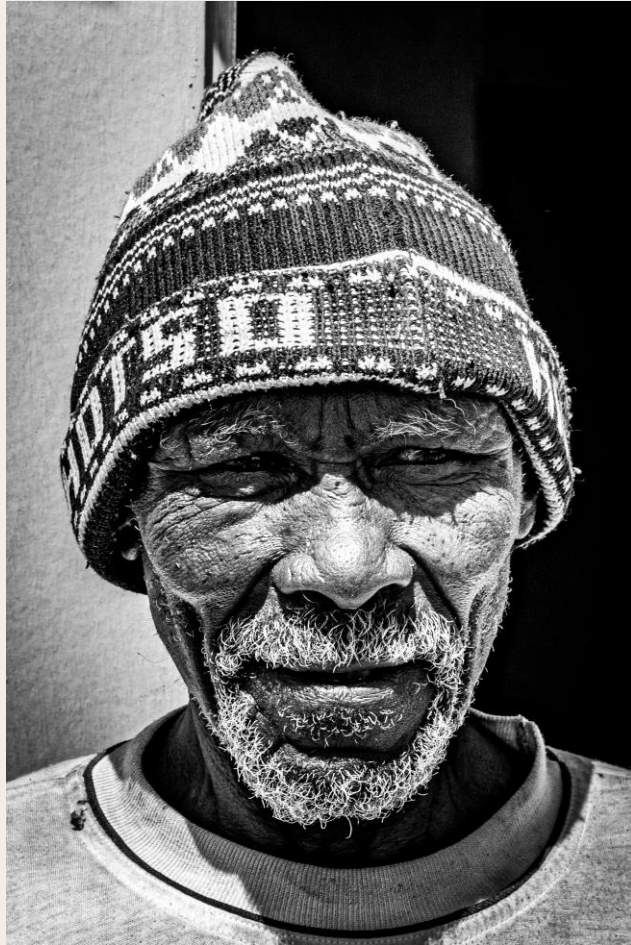


“ Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of great age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets. ”



Agenda

- Focus on accompaniment
- Three case studies
- Introduction and break out groups
- Whole group discussion
- X3
- Brief close



Case study 1

Local and global context of ageing

Comfortable for some; desperate for others

Mr Solomon's story

“The response to control the COVID-19 pandemic has unveiled just how widespread ageism is – older and younger people have been stereotyped in public discourse and on social media. In some contexts, age has been used as the sole criterion for access to medical care, lifesaving therapies and for physical isolation”.

Break out groups

Questions:

- In 2020 147 million people around the world were aged 80-99 (approximately 2% of the whole)
1. How do we accompany older people in the greatest need?
 2. What emphasis do the particular needs of older people have in international aid?
 3. Should churches with ageing congregations link with similar communities to 'accompany one another' through the joys and sorrows of ageing?



Case study 1

Discussion

“Between 2015 and 2050, the proportion of the world's population over 60 years will nearly double from 12% to 22%”.

World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/news/item/18-03-2021-ageism-is-a-global-challenge>



Case study 2

4th age

Accompaniment in demanding times

Disjointed 'reality'

Impact on carers

“Findings demonstrated the ongoing importance of spirituality to people living with dementia and its importance as a means of finding hope, meaning and linkage with past, present and future”.

Daly L, Fahey-McCarthy E, Timmins F. The experience of spirituality from the perspective of people living with dementia: A systematic review and meta-synthesis. *Dementia*. 2016;18(2):448-470. doi:10.1177/1471301216680425

Break out groups

Questions:

1. What does it mean to accompany someone living with dementia?
2. Are there characteristics to the spirituality of dementia?
3. What can the church and/or society do to improve care for older people?



Case study 2

Discussion

“dementia raises questions about faith, suffering, and the meaning of life, particularly regarding the dignity of individuals with dementia and how they can be included in the church community”

Ai overview on Google



Case study 3

3rd age

'Successful' ageing

Strong eudemonic orientation

Impact on others

"Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, At all the times you can, To all the people you can, As long as ever you can."

John Wesley

Break out groups

Questions:

1. Does 'successful ageing' condemn others to 'failed ageing'?
2. Can a focus on doing be a form of denying the changes age brings?
3. How do we accompany the 3rd age and people's ambition?



Case study 3

Discussion

“As we get older our rights do not change. As we get older, we are no less human and should not become invisible,” said 84-year-old Archbishop Desmond



Concluding Remarks

The need for accompaniment

The cost of accompanying

The spirituality of accompaniment

Our role?

“I argue that a liberation theology of ageing should include older people having a place of belonging in the wider community, and that this is necessary for the community to have shalom. Belonging frees older people from feelings of shame and marginalisation, enabling them to flourish”.

Hindle, H. (2022). Windows on the world: towards a theology of liberation for older people living in residential care homes. *Practical Theology*, 16(1), 6–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2022.2119661>