

# Old Age and Well-Being in Christian Thought

*Kyoung Hee Lee*

Today, population ageing is taking place in nearly all the countries of the world. Consequently, how to cope with ageing has become a major issue in modern society. A predominant view in our society is that people become gradually more religious as they age and that there is an inevitable turning toward religion in later life. Every society from the earliest known times has had some system of religious beliefs and practices. The Church has been providing a variety of services and programs for seniors as well as widows, orphans and other minority groups.

This paper has two objectives: 1) to review how old age has been associated with religion through literature, and 2) to examine relationships between religious activities and well-being amongst older people within Christianity. For the purpose of the study, the research is mostly a textual study and mainly depends on primary and secondary sources on the subject.

According to records, old age has characteristically been associated with religion in many primitive societies. Some studies show that belief in God is stronger among the elderly than in other agegroups. According to Bahr (1970), there are two types of religious activities: organizational and non-organizational. Many studies have shown positive relationships between religious activities and the well-being among older persons. Blazer and Palmore (1976) found that for the elderly, happiness, a sense of usefulness, and personal adjustment are significantly related to religious activities and attitudes.

At the individual level, religion may perform certain psychological functions during the later years. Similarly, at the social level, the church can help to reduce isolation of the elderly by affording them education, counsel and social services.

**Keywords:** Christianity, old age and religion, religious activity, well-being