

January 25, 1973

Dr. Arthur Flemming
Consultant to
the President on Aging
425 Thirteenth Street, N. W.
Rm. 1012
Washington, D. C. 20004

Dear Dr. Flemming,

As you may recall, I had a brief conversation with you following one of your splendid addresses at the Gerontological Society Meeting in Puerto Rico in December, 1972. It was concerning the use of church facilities for various programs with the aged involving federal funds.

I am writing to you, not in my professional capacities as a member of the Department of Psychiatry at Duke University Medical and as Director of the Geropsychiatry Services at John Umstead State Hospital, but in my lay capacity as a member of the Administrative Board of my local church. Our church is currently considering allowing the use of several basement rooms for a so-called "Community Life Program" for thirty elderly Durham citizens from the lower income groups. This program is to be administered by the Durham Co-ordinating Council For Senior Citizens, a non-profit United Fund agency, that is to be funded from Social Security funds from Title XVI appropriations.

There has been apprehension on the part of a number of church members about the implication of this action, fearing that the church, its programs, properties and policies will be adversely effected by the regulations and requirements and intentions of the federal government. Some fear that this represents a move by the federal government to gain control over the churches. I suspect that many people around the country, unfortunately, are concerned about this as well and I would hope that you would be able to respond to this issue, not only for the proposed program at our local church but as a general statement of policy for those many other churches who might be considering allowing part of their properties to be used for similar programs.

Some specific questions have been raised as well. To how much of the churches' properties would the Civil Rights Regulations of 1964 be applied? Would the churches have to remove any religious decorations from the areas utilized? Would optional Bible study with the clients be permitted? In case of damage to the properties beyond normal wear and tear, how would the liability or insurance be handled? When the

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specific project terminates (either through project completion, or by notice of either party) what residual interest control or authority would the federal government have in the church?

I would hope that you might be able to respond to these directly and/or cite previous statements of intent and policy in order to help us deal with these problems. There is certainly a crying need for more programs for older citizens in our communities and I feel that part of the facilities of churches would certainly be logical places to have these. I do know, however, that the problems of the church and state separation and cooperation are of concern to many. Some of these questions came up at a meeting at our church a day ago and the issue is coming up again for voting on February 6, 1973. If it would be possible for me to have some information from you in hand at that time, it would be of extreme help in our deliberation.

With many thanks to you for the splendid job you have been doing on a national scale for the interest of our older citizens, and for your attention to this specific inquiry, I remain

Very sincerely yours,

Alan D. Whanger, M. D.
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ADW/rh.

