

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

A MINISTRY DESCRIPTION FOR LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

Introduction

In His earthly ministry Christ worked out a pattern for His followers to copy. He “went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed” (Acts 10:38). Christ identified with the poor and oppressed. “He fed the hungry and healed the sick. . . By the good He accomplished, by His loving words and kindly deeds, He interpreted the Gospel to men,” comments Ellen White. “Christ’s work in behalf of man is not finished. It continues today. In like manner His ambassadors are to preach the gospel and to reveal His pitying love for lost and perishing souls. By an unselfish interest in those who need help they are to give a practical demonstration of the truth of the gospel” (*Welfare Ministry*, pages 56-57).

When a church serves the world it is an expression of the love of Christ to the world. It is the body of Christ serving the world’s needs and being used by the Holy Spirit as an agency of salvation.

The church was created for service. It serves the Lord in praise, serves one another in love, and serves the world in humility. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Eph. 2:10).

Duties of the Community Services Director

The major functions and tasks of the local church community service director are the following:

1. *Discovering the needs of the community.* A needs assessment of your area should be completed every two or three years by visual inspection; by talking with police, fire, mental health, and welfare authorities; by reviewing the news media; and by conducting surveys. A methodology for conducting a community survey has been published in chapter four of *Ministries of Compassion* (AdventSource 1994).
2. *Mobilizing a response to specific concerns.* It is your responsibility to help your church identify social concerns to which it feels called to respond. Usually this decision will be made in the outreach or personal ministries committee. Once the decision is made you will have the task of getting the word out and rousing the congregation to action. To learn how to mobilize and organize the church members for outreach, see *Ministries of Compassion*, chapter three.
3. *Organization of programs.* You will be asked to recruit volunteers and arrange details of disaster relief programs, entry events (activities through which non-members participate for the first time in a church-sponsored activity), and other social action projects. These will include health screening, aid for the poor, literacy and employment assistance, and inner city programs.
4. *Establish cooperation.* The community services director is asked to work with other organizations in the community so the church does not duplicate services. Contracts have been negotiated at national levels with the Red Cross and government agencies specifying what Adventist Community Services will do in the event of major disasters and related to certain social problems. Similar agreements are needed in your area. This may mean that you, or someone you appoint, will meet regularly with inter-agency committees to represent the Adventist Church.
5. *Communication.* You are the person the congregation expects to keep it posted about Adventist Community Services activities, as well as provide information on current issues. This means that you will want to utilize the personal ministries time once a month (as outlined in denominational policy), prepare announcements for the bulletin and church newsletter, and distribute a comprehensive statistical report at least once a year. Since the yearly “Ingathering” appeal is a major source of funds for community services, the community service leader will want to be involved.

Resource Materials

The following resources are recommended for your ministry. You can purchase these by calling *AdventSource* (800-328-0525), the Adventist Book Center (800-765-6955) or your local Christian bookstore.

A Public Relations Primer compiled by Ann Calkins will help your Adventist Community Services Center identify with current social issues, and gain public attention.

Adventist Mission in the 21st Century, ed. by Jon Dybdahl. Subtitled "Presenting Jesus to a Diverse World," this book asks some serious questions: What have we accomplished? What challenges remain? What are we doing to finish the work? What works and what doesn't?

Christian Service by Ellen G. White.

Compassion in a time of AIDS by Harvey Elder, M.D., Bruce Campbell Moyer, S.T.D., Eunice Diaz, Ph.D., Carolyn Watkins, M.A.

Follow Me: How to Walk With Jesus, by Miraslov Kis. With sensitive sketches of people whose lives were transformed when they met Jesus, the author gives us new eyes, and then explores the implications of following Jesus.

Ministries of Compassion is a revised edition of the Adventist Community Services manual. This is the official guide for community service centers, the inner city program, and similar projects.

Ministries of Health and Healing (2002 Revised) is the handbook for health ministries. Includes overall mission and objectives, and chapters on specific ministries.

The Ministry of Healing by Ellen G. White.

Welfare Ministry by Ellen G. White.

When Disaster Strikes is a step-by-step guide for public information officers and is a must for anyone involved in Adventist Disaster Response.

Who Are the Seventh-day Adventists? by John Seaman. This sharing booklet gives a brief sketch of Adventist history, beliefs, people, church, and mission.

Visit *AdventSource* On-Line at www.adventsource.org/cs for a complete list of the latest resources available for local church leaders. You can place an order or request a catalog by calling 1-800-328-0525.

For information about additional resources and answers to your questions call the Adventist Plusline at 1-800-732-7587 or visit them on-line at www.plusline.org.