

Community Services

Personal Ministries Leaflets

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Definition. “Community Services” is the current name for the Christian social ministry of Seventh-day Adventist Church volunteers. The oldest name used in the early years of denominational history was Benevolent Service. In some countries the term Welfare Service or Health and Welfare Service is still in use.

General Conference committee action has assigned Community Services to the Department of Personal Ministries for direction and support. In the local church the personal ministries leader is the director of Community Services. In larger church congregations another individual may be elected as Community Services leader; in such cases the Community Services leader serves as an assistant to the church personal ministries leader.

In all cases the Community Services program of the church is planned and operated through the church personal ministries council. The personal ministries leader is chairman of this council and the personal ministries secretary of the church is secretary of the council. Included among the members of this council are the Community Services leader, director of the Community Services center, the Dorcas leader, and the Adventist Men’s leader. The council should meet monthly to plan the missionary programs and services of the church, including Community Services. Some program and agenda suggestions will be made available from the conference/mission department of personal ministries.

History and Theological Base. In His life and ministry, Jesus supplied the perfect pattern for Christian Community Services. Acts 10:38 tells how He relieved the physical suffering of the people and then opened up to them the spiritual truths of His kingdom. See also *Welfare Ministry*, p. 60.

The early Christian church was directed to care for the needs of widows and orphans. See *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 88-91. The ministry of men was prominent in these services. The work of Dorcas was so vital to needy mothers and children that she was raised from the dead to continue her work.

At the beginning of Seventh-day Adventist Church history regular offerings for the poor were received. The first Dorcas Society was organized in Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1874. Soon most congregations had a working Dorcas group. The Dorcas Society remains to this day the major Community Services group organization of most local churches.

In recent years a growing number of churches have organized a group known as Adventist Men. This group has three major missionary activities: lay preaching, prison ministry, and Community Services. See the *Community Services Manual* for a description of the Community Services work of Adventist Men.

Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, Community Services centers were established by local churches. These, now numbering close to two thousand, are found in every division of the world.

The Community Services center, directed by the church personal ministries council, is operated and supported by the whole church. The Dorcas Society, in most cases, supplies the principal working staff. A center must be officially graded and recognized by a conference survey team and must meet specific standards, otherwise the room (or rooms) used for Community Services that does not meet all the requirements of a center is designated a Community Services unit. There are approximately 4,000 such units in the world field.

God's concern for the physical and economic needs of people is made plain in such scriptural passages as Isaiah 58, Job 29, Luke 10, and James 2. The writings of Ellen White, particularly *Welfare Ministry*, *The Ministry of Healing*, and *Christ's Object Lessons*, make clear that true Christianity is demonstrated in loving care for the physical and spiritual needs of people. The ideal ministry to people in trouble is seen in the life of Jesus, who combined healing and giving material aid with proclaiming the good news of the gospel.

The Dorcas Society. Every local congregation should have as an important element of the church Community Services a group of women organized into a Dorcas Society. It is the responsibility of the personal ministries leader of the church, and the personal ministries council, to initiate the organization of the Society in a church that has none.

All women of the church should be called by the pastor or personal ministries leader to meet together in order to consider forming and supporting an organization, to nominate one or more persons to the church board for appointment as Dorcas leader, to ascertain what day and hours will be most convenient for weekly work meetings and to determine the meeting place.

In ensuing years the church nominating committee will bring to the church the name of a Dorcas leader to be elected by the whole church. A Dorcas secretary-treasurer should be appointed by vote of the majority of the Dorcas members, as well as any other officers needed.

Meetings are held in the home of a Dorcas member, in a room of the church building, or in the Community Services center building. Some churches have two working groups of Dorcas members—one group meets and works during the day, another group works in the evening. Each group chooses a distinctive name and each group has its special projects. These groups function in complementary fashion, not in competition. Coordination is achieved either by way of a common leader or through a small committee, with representation from each group.

The essential guidelines for developing Dorcas projects are found in the book *Welfare Ministry* and in the *Community Services Manual*. Usually older women repair and clean good, serviceable clothing, make or provide bedding, and supply food in family emergencies. They should secure the aid of juniors, youth, and other church members in the collection of clothing, bedding, and food from the community and from local merchants. Younger women often specialize in services to mothers and children, including the supplying of layettes and the making of new clothing for small children. All Dorcas groups are involved in sponsoring children of disadvantaged families to a summer friendship camp. Visiting the aged, the invalids, and the sick in their homes, hospitals, or in nursing homes, is another important Dorcas ministry.

On Community Services Day (usually the first Sabbath in May) the worship sermon should be devoted to Community Services and its place in the evangelistic mission of the church. The pastor, elder, or personal ministries leader may present the Bible message based in part on outlines and materials appearing in the *Community Services Manual*.

Community Services Workers' Pledge. Any woman of the church may become a member of the society by signifying a desire to do so and signing the workers' pledge (form CS-8). Church members should be urged through public announcement and personal invitation to join the society. At least once a year cards should be given out in a service so that those not already members may have opportunity to join. None should be excluded from participating in the work of the society even though they have not signed the covenant or attended meetings. Non-Adventist neighbors and friends should be invited to participate in the work of the Dorcas Society and the Community Services center. The same pledge card is used by Dorcas members, Adventist Men, and other Community Services volunteers.

The Community Services pledge cards are furnished free and should be ordered by the church personal ministries secretary from the local conference/mission department of personal ministries. The pledge reads as follows:

“Inspired by the example of Christ who gave Himself in personal ministry to the poor, the sick and the troubled, and aware that the church cannot prosper without such practical ministry, I covenant to serve as a Community Services Worker, and desire to be registered in the: 1. Dorcas Society, 2. Community Services Center, 3. Adventist Men, 4. _____.”

All the gifts of the Spirit are to be found in God's church on earth, but no one individual possesses all those gifts. Various members possess different gifts and talents, some of which are especially suited to the Community Services program of the church. Those who cannot attend the meetings or sew should not be made to feel that they are not needed in the Dorcas Society. There are types of Dorcas activity suited to every interest and talent. Some persons have special ability in meeting the public and soliciting from them materials, clothing, or funds to be used in the work of the society. Some may feel called to interview Center clients or make follow-up visits to homes. Activities of all the church working groups should be coordinated in the spirit of Christ.

The objective of all service is to win others to Christ, so let each one work “according to his several ability.” But let all be kept busy along the lines of their special talents or interests. A vast amount of work can be done by nonattending members. A wise leader will endeavor to build up a home-working force, as well as a more closely affiliated membership.

The Dorcas Leader. The Dorcas leader must be a person who loves people, who is able to get along with others, and who can plan and lay out work for others. The leader needs to be patient, able to weather criticism, and willing to work in the face of obstacles. One of the most useful talents is the ability to enlist helpers through personal invitation and assignment.

The Dorcas leader plans and presides at Dorcas meetings, and leads in the welfare activities of the society. Although the leader may have assistants who share the responsibility, the leader keeps a finger on the pulse of every committee, working group, or line of endeavor sponsored by the society.

Where there are several Dorcas groups in a church, the personal ministries leader and/or Community Services leader should call together the officers of all groups for a planning council early in the year—and often several times through the year—to determine objectives, to decide on projects that the groups

may do together, and on the types of activities in which each shall specialize. Occasionally in the first Sabbath services and in the ten-minute services arrangements should be made for each group to set forth its work and its needs.

Leaders should plan with all groups for participation in the federation meetings, camp-meeting programs, and exhibits. Each group should plan to give its own experience report for the federation meeting unless otherwise instructed by federation officers. The statistical report of each group is sent to the federation president by the secretary of each of the Dorcas groups each quarter and is then compiled by the federation secretary. (See "Reporting" in the *Community Services Manual*.) Where there is a Community Services center in a church with several Dorcas groups, each group should be represented on the center's operating committee.

The Secretary-Treasurer. The person chosen for secretary-treasurer should be one who has an active interest in this work, and who will cooperate with the leader in planning and executing the various activities. The secretary keeps a record of all the work done by the society, and reports such to the church, to the conference personal ministries director, and to the federation officers in harmony with instructions given on the Dorcas report blank and in another section of this leaflet.

To facilitate record-keeping by the secretary-treasurer, two record books are available through the conference/mission department of personal ministries: the Dorcas Society Meeting Record Book and the Dorcas Society Cash Record Book. The first is to record minutes of all meetings held, and the second is to facilitate the keeping of financial records.

The secretary-treasurer receives all funds, keeps an accurate record of all income and expenditures, gives a receipt for all funds received, and retains vouchers for all disbursements. Funds are turned over to the church treasurer.

At least once a quarter the secretary-treasurer should render a financial report to the society, showing receipts, expenditures, and the current financial standing. A copy of this report should be placed with the church treasurer, so that all financial items of the Dorcas Society can be included in the full report of finances.

In harmony with the action of the General Conference Committee (Annual Council, 1941), the treasurer of the church is the custodian of all church funds, including Dorcas funds. The action reads: "The funds of the Dorcas society are to be turned over to the church treasurer, to be held in trust only, and shall be disbursed on order of the Dorcas Society."

Experience has demonstrated that a uniform plan for handling funds will obviate many difficulties, and Dorcas Societies should conform to the regulation. This means that the church treasurer simply becomes the banker for the Dorcas Society and holds the funds in trust, subject to orders from the society. In some cases where the Dorcas treasurer may find it difficult to reach the church treasurer as frequently as may be necessary in order to secure needed funds, it is suggested that the treasurer of the society withdraw sufficient funds to cover expenses for a short time, giving the church treasurer a receipt for the amount, and thus have funds readily available for the running expenses of the society. This petty-cash account may consist of from \$20 to \$40, depending on the size of the society and the

needs, and vouchers for expenditures may be turned in to the church treasurer for cash as often as necessary. Money of the society cannot be withdrawn without the consent of the society. See the *Church Manual* for further clarification of handling of funds of the auxiliary organizations of the church, such as the Dorcas Society.

Reports

The reporting duties of Dorcas secretaries can be outlined simply in the following three steps:

1. The church Dorcas secretary and the secretary of any auxiliary Dorcas group in the church shall keep a weekly record of the activities of the working members.
2. At the close of each quarter the secretary will place in the hands of the church personal ministries secretary the totals of the four welfare items in Section I of the Community Services Report Blank No. CS-11.
3. At the same time, the secretary will complete filling out the Community Services Blank No. CS-11, and supply copies to the persons indicated on the blank, including the conference/mission department of personal ministries.

For more detailed information on the procedure to be followed by the Dorcas societies in reporting their activities, see the *Community Services Manual*.

Meetings

The Time. It is recommended that wherever practicable the society should meet once each week. If this does not seem possible members should come together every two or three weeks, or at the least once each month. The most successful results are seen when the society holds its meetings weekly

Some societies meet from 9:00am to 3:00 pm. Other societies, particularly where most of the members are employed during the day, hold their meetings in the evening.

The Program. The Dorcas Society meeting is for work and for planning. A devotional should always be included. This factor binds the workers together and makes for harmony.

The devotional feature may consist of a scripture reading, a brief study from the Spirit of Prophecy, or a talk by one of the members on a relevant subject. The devotional period should be limited to ten or fifteen minutes. Time should be allowed for a season for prayer on behalf of persons for whom the society is working. Remarkable conversions have taken place as a result of earnest prayers. Reading *Welfare Ministry* with the Study Guide will help members to understand the importance of this work and how to carry it out.

Community Services Unit. Rarely does a Dorcas Society occupy itself exclusively with programs that do not involve direct personal contact with needy persons in the community—such as bandage-making for mission stations and preparing boxes of clothing for overseas distribution. Progressive groups do not remain at this stage. They will develop services in behalf of those in need of their own community.

As soon as a Dorcas Society collects clothing and materials, has a place for keeping these, and has determined a process of distribution, it is operating a Community Services unit, or workroom. The Dorcas Society operating the Community Services unit ascertains needs through visiting or by referral of other welfare agencies, cares for these needs, and gives sympathetic assistance.

In meeting community needs, the society works in cooperation with the personal ministries council. The entire church should be challenged; all facets of church talent should be brought together to make this work more effective.

Difference Between Unit and Center. The difference between the Community Services unit and the Community Services center consists in the nature of physical arrangements.

The Community Services Center

The Community Services center is the headquarters for Community Services operations and is termed a center only if it meets certain standards and is certified as a center by the conference/mission department of personal ministries. The chief function of the center is to provide a convenient place for the public to receive the community services offered by the church—educational (health and welfare), material, and spiritual.

Specifications for a Community Services center are fully described in the *Community Services Manual*. It is important that the pastor, personal ministries leader, and Dorcas personnel study the manual carefully. In brief the standards are:

1. *Physical Aspects*

- a. Such a center shall be a separate building from the church, or space in a church building with separate entrance, with sufficient space for workroom, storage, and public reception, the whole to be approved and authorized by the church (or churches) and the conference/mission.
- b. It shall post hours of service.
- c. Provision shall be made for complete inventory, financial records, service records, and case records.

2. *Organization and Personnel*

- a. Where more than one church is involved, a center operating board should be formed, composed of representatives of all the churches participating. The conference/mission personal ministries director will be a member of this committee. This board will elect the Community Services center officers, including a director, guide the work of the Community Services center, and decide which church treasurer shall be custodian of the Community Services center funds.
- b. Where a single church operates the Community Services center, the personal ministries council of the church will control the operations of the center, or the personal ministries council may appoint an operating board sufficiently large to direct the work of the center. The following church officers may be included as members of this board: personal ministries leader, chairperson; pastor or district leader; church elder; personal ministries secretary, secretary of the committee; Community Services leader; Dorcas leader and secretary; and director of the center. The personal ministries

council will select a center director. The center director may or may not be the Dorcas Society leader. For duties of the director of the center see the *Community Services Manual*.

Only those buildings or rooms that meet the conference/mission specifications will be certified and named Community Services centers. All other places that may perform similar functions but fail to meet the standards in one or more points will be know as Community Services units.

Minimum Needs of the Unit

Certain items of equipment are needed in even the smallest societies. The essentials generally are sewing machines, cutting and sizing tables, iron, ironing board, chairs, scissors, needles, pins, thread, buttons, quilting frames, first-aid kit, stove, cooking utensils, dishes, and cupboards for storing supplies for disaster relief and for continuing material aid.

As our societies are recognized by the public as agencies working for the needy, merchants in the cities will be willing to donate valuable equipment, furniture, or materials.

Types of Service

The following types of Dorcas service have been carried on very effectively in may different places, and will serve to suggest ways in which your local society may serve. As you study and pray for divine guidance other ideas will come to mind.

1. Visiting and praying for the sick.
2. Distributing food to the needy.
3. Arranging for homes and/or care for orphans and the aged.
4. Making needed articles and scrapbooks for orphanages, old people's homes, and hospitals.
5. Making or mending garments for the needy.
6. Reading to the aged and the blind.
7. Conducting classes in cooking, sewing, and home nursing.
8. Conducting prison work.
9. Caring for children and helping burdened mothers.
10. Sympathizing with and ministering to the bereaved.
11. Visiting in the neighborhood.
12. Caring for widows.
13. Visiting homes to find needs and resources.
14. Helping disadvantaged children to attend summer camp.
15. Cooperating with the Red Cross and disaster-relief organizations.
16. Helping to care for the poor in the church.
17. Soliciting clothing, bedding, and other needed supplies from the public.
18. Follow-up visiting after giving material aid.
19. Inviting the poor and the aged to Thanksgiving or Christmas dinners.
20. Raising and canning vegetables and fruit for the service center.
21. Sending get-well messages.
22. Teaching home management and care of children.

Cooperating With Other Relief Agencies

Relationship to Various Community Health and Welfare Programs. Any church with a Community Services program should cooperate with the health and welfare services of the community in which it is situated. This embodies both responsibilities and privileges. Our program is operated in coordination with other community agencies.

Organizations such as the Red Cross and Family Services do commendable work and should be supported; however, care must be exercised lest our distinctive program be neglected. Our major resources should be devoted to personal service to individuals and families through our own agencies.

Raising and Disbursing Dorcas and Community Services Funds

All Dorcas and Community Services funds should be carefully guarded and used only for welfare ministry. Helping the poor in the church or community, at home or abroad; ministering to those who are ill, discouraged, sorrowing, or to those confined in public institutions; purchasing supplies for carrying on the various activities of the society—these are legitimate demands upon the Dorcas and Community Services funds.

Community Services and Dorcas funds should not be used for church expense or redecorating the church; providing a new roof or pews or a new carpet; building a church school; paying school tuition or teachers' salaries. Dorcas workers as individual members of the church will do their part to help in these church projects, but these are not to be made Dorcas Society projects.

No one person is responsible for deciding how the Dorcas funds should be spent. Officers should carefully study needs brought to their attention, then the matter should be placed before the entire society for consideration. Funds are paid out in harmony with the action of the society. In an emergency, or in the purchase of small items of supplies for carrying on the society's work, the leader and secretary may counsel together and make such necessary purchases or meet such emergencies, which may afterward be brought to the society for ratification. The *Community Services Manual* should be carefully studied for information concerning the financial resources for welfare work.

The latest recommendation on the subject of the Community Services finance was made by the North American Lay Activities Directors' Council in 1963, as follows:

“WHEREAS, in these days of crisis and trouble, there are many human needs unfilled and unmet in the family, congregation, community, and the world, and many persons who need a friend and a helping hand—the sick, the poor, the widowed, the orphaned, members of broken homes, the broken-hearted, those in the grip of evil habits; and,

“WHEREAS, many of these deep physical and spiritual needs of people can so well be met by the personal ministry of our consecrated Dorcas womanhood; and,

“WHEREAS, these troubled days are also busy days when time for voluntary welfare [community] service is greatly limited, especially for the younger women and mothers of small children; and,

“WHEREAS, a substantial part of precious volunteer time is now being consumed in raising funds by the making and selling of food and handiwork.

“WE RECOMMEND, (1) That we urge our Dorcas and other welfare workers of the church to devote every moment of available time to helping those people who are in need, and that this service be directed especially to visiting and helping people in their homes; and,

“(2) That we call upon the whole church to release these faithful welfare [Community Services] workers from the business of earning funds in order to give more personal attention to the needs of the poor; also to support this good work in the church and community by following the divinely given plan for providing for the poor as outlined in the Sacred Scriptures and in the Spirit of Prophecy—namely, systematic, proportionate, and sacrificial giving by such means as:

1. Ingathering reversion.
2. The missionary offering on Welfare [Community Services] Day, the first Sabbath of May.
3. Systematic giving to work for poor through tithe envelope.
4. The communion offering.
5. Inclusion of regular appropriations in church budget.
6. The thank offering.
7. Free-will offerings at benefit concerts or programs.
8. Personal annual pledges.
9. Unsolicited contributions from community sources as our personal ministry becomes known and appreciated.
10. Inclusion in wills.

“(3) That we appeal to our administrators and committees to provide a liberal portion of Ingathering reversion for Health and Welfare Services [now Community Services] in the communities where these funds are gathered.” See also the Annual Council action “Greater Health and Welfare Ministry” in the *Community Services Manual*.

Helps. Welfare Ministry and “A Call to Medical Evangelism,” by Ellen G. White; the *Community Services Manual*, which explains the work in full and has one chapter listing supplies and helps.

Order personal ministries leaflets from your Adventist Book Center unless otherwise instructed by your personal ministries director. Lists of helpful materials may be obtained from the General Conference Health Ministries Department. Community Services pins, name tags, and arm bands are available from your conference/mission personal ministries director.

Cooperating With Church Deacons. Dorcas Society members and the staff of the Community Services center should cooperate with the deacons and deaconesses in helping to meet the needs of church members.

The Federation

The constituents of the Community Services Federation are the Community Services units, centers, Dorcas Societies, and Adventist Men’s groups of all churches in one geographical area of a local conference. The federation is organized through the initiative of the conference/mission department of

personal ministries. Each church in the federation areas has a voice in the election of officers and in the business of the federation through its representatives present at regularly called federation meetings. Semi-annual meetings are held in the communities of the member churches. The federation exercises no authority over its constituent members. Its function is advisory, educational, and inspirational. The conference is divided geographically into convenient federation areas. Officers serve for a two-year period and are elected by a nominating committee composed as follows: conference/mission personal ministries director, chairperson; pastors of all churches in the federation; one lay person from each church in the federation. Each federation adopts its own constitution and bylaws. A sample federation constitution appears in the *Community Services Manual*.

Federation Finances. Federation dues are paid by each member society to cover operating expenses of the organization. These are payable annually or semi-annually, usually at the time of meeting. An offering is also received at each federation meeting. After the host church has been reimbursed for expenses in connection with the meeting, the balance of the offering is credited to the federation account.

Federation funds are held in trust by the federation secretary-treasurer, and a report of the federation account is presented at each meeting. Funds are deposited with the conference/mission treasurer or with the treasurer of the church where the federation treasurer resides.

Federation funds are expended only by vote of the federation in session. They are used to cover expenses of federation officers in visiting churches of the federation, for federation correspondence, and for transportation to federation officer meetings called by the conference/mission personal ministries director. An accurate record of receipts and expenditures is kept by the federation treasurer.

Federation Officers

Federation President. Ideally, the federation president is a person of maturity with Christian poise and dignity, tact, cheerful disposition, and ability in public speaking. Principal duties are stated in the federation constitution. These include: to plan with the officers and the conference/mission personal ministries director for the federation meetings, to visit the societies and centers in the federation, to encourage work already in progress, and to help initiate community services where they do not exist.

In visiting societies and centers, an officer of the federation should make prior arrangements with the pastor or district leader of the church involved. Federation officers should help pastors and leaders of churches with Community Services programs by counseling and planning with them.

The officers of the conference/mission federations cooperate with the local conference/mission personal ministries director and the president of the conference/mission federation, where one has been elected, in implementing the general denominational Community Services program. Projects and programs are initiated by counseling and planning together beforehand.

Vice-President. The vice-president's duties are set forth in full in the constitution. The vice-president assists the president and should share in the responsibility of visiting the societies and centers. The vice-president should be present at the federation meetings and should be ready to preside should it be necessary.

Secretary-Treasurer. The secretary-treasurer is responsible for funds and for reports from individual groups and should furnish each society with a copy of the constitution and bylaws of the federation. The secretary-treasurer informs the member groups of the time and place of meetings.

The federation secretary-treasurer should have an accurate list of all church Dorcas Society officers, Adventist Men leaders, and Community Services center directors in the federation, and should send word advising each one of the date and place of the coming federation meeting, and of the guest speaker, if possible, well in advance (a month or six weeks). About ten days before the meeting, cards should be sent out to remind them again of the date and hour.

The secretary-treasurer should call for and secure a quarterly report of the activities of each local Dorcas Society and center within the federation area. The Dorcas Society secretary is supplied with report blanks and makes a report, sending it to the conference/mission personal ministries director. One copy should be sent to the federation president. These reports should reach the federation president by the tenth day of the month following the end of the quarter. The secretary of the federation will then compile them so that a comparative report can be presented at the time of the federation meeting. Records must be kept in order and up-to-date and made accessible to the new officers.

The secretary-treasurer of the federation, with the president, will encourage the societies to give experience reports at the federation meeting. It is not necessary for them to give statistics at that time, since the federation secretary will have these on hand to give out, read, or in some other way share with the group.

The secretary-treasurer will supply information and statistics to the communication secretaries of the churches of which the groups are members early enough to allow them time to get out advance stories to the papers.

The Federation Meeting

The federation meeting is one of the president's chief responsibilities. With the personal ministries director of the conference/mission and the federation officers, the president should plan far in advance for the meeting. Opportunity for discussions should be given, as well as time for the exchange of ideas and experiences. Suggested programs are given in the *Community Services Manual*.

Many federation leaders find that federation meeting time provides an excellent opportunity to have their officers' council meet. Preparing for it in advance, they are able to hold the council for a half-hour or an hour to plan for the work in the interim. This committee should meet several times during the year.

Devotional. The short devotional study precedes the session. The speaker should be informed by the president of the maximum time allowed for this study. For a coherent program it is usually best for the president to suggest a topic. Specific subjects brought out in *Welfare Ministry* are especially suited to the federation meeting.

Meeting Dates. It is advisable to counsel with the conference/mission personal ministries director, since his or her presence is needed and the federation meeting date must fit into their schedule. They also

may be able at times to arrange for a guest speaker to visit a number of federations if the meetings dates are coordinated.

A special session is usually held at camp meeting, at which time the conference/mission personal ministries director and the conference/mission federation president work together in planning and carrying out the program. Special preparation should be made to make this an outstanding meeting.

The Guest Speaker. The federation officers and the conference/mission personal ministries director should work together closely on the matter of a guest speaker. Choose the speaker carefully, keeping in mind the purpose you wish to accomplish. A subject should be suggested, unless you have full confidence in the one who is to speak. The following are suggestions for suitable speakers:

1. A representative from the Department of Personal Ministries of the General Conference, union or local conference/mission
2. An Adventist social worker
3. The conference/mission nurse, or health secretary, or persons who are active in health education
4. Persons who have experience in welfare and/or social services
5. A fire-department representative
6. State prison chaplain
7. Prison or secretary from a nearby federation
8. Center directors and/or Dorcas Society leaders of experience.

It should not be expected that the General Conference will have a representative at each meeting or even every year. See the *Community Services Manual* for additional help.

Other Suggestions. Provision should be made at every meeting for the conference/mission director to present conference/mission programs or other matters before the group.

Occasionally some other feature may also be presented. Programs and projects of the federation should be limited to health and welfare services. Be sure this is well planned in advance so that every detail is understood. The following are suggestions:

1. Disaster-training exercise
2. A lesson from the Study Guide to *Welfare Ministry*
3. Lecture by professional social worker
4. Demonstration talk by nurse or health educator
5. Cooking demonstration by nutritionist
6. Panel discussion
7. Buzz session on common problems
8. Film

The Conference/Mission Federation President

In addition to the area federation presidents, many conferences/missions also have a conference/mission federation president. This officer is elected by the conference/mission committee. The conference/mission federation president holds office for two years and may be re-elected. Usually a person of experience in Community Services center operations, they work with the personal ministries

director of the conference/mission to promote, encourage, and strengthen the work of the Community Services federations, Dorcas Societies, Community Services centers, and other community services.

The functions of the conference/mission federation president are as follows: He or she meets with the conference/mission Community Services and Disaster Committee, or with the personal ministries director, conference/mission president, and conference/mission secretary-treasurer to plan the Community Services activities for the year. They submit pertinent material for the conference/mission bulletin serving the Dorcas Societies and Community Services centers.

They may also give help to the officers of a local federation in preparing the program for their particular federation meeting, but do not preside. The local federation leader presides at such meetings. With the sponsorship of the conference/mission personal ministries director, the federation president meets with all the federation officers at least once a year. They should become familiar with the community services being carried on in each area, the particular strengths and weaknesses of individual federations, and should constantly strive to give practical and inspirational help where needed.

The federation president presides at the conference/mission federation meetings, usually held at camp meeting and represents the federation at union welfare leaders' meetings or on other occasions as assigned by the personal ministries director. In problems situations, he or she is sent by the conference/mission to do what they can to unify the program.

They help orient new federation officers by instruction; by supplying materials; by recommending the study of *Welfare Ministry*, the use of *Community Services Manual*, and other sources of information and help that come to their attention either directly or through the personal ministries director.

They follow the pattern of conference organization for disaster relief in carrying out whatever duties are assigned them. These would usually have to do with contacts and directives to federation presidents. In all contacts with the churches, the conference/mission federation president should remember that the pastor is the leader of all church functions and therefore interested in any contact to be made with individual groups.

At the time conference/mission meetings are held, the conference/mission federation president asks for the appointment of a secretary pro tem so that minutes can be kept. These minutes are filed in the conference/mission office, available to the conference/mission president and the conference/mission personal ministries director. At present, the conference/mission president performs all of the functions ordinarily carried on by a secretary and compiles the reports of all federations.

Where no conference/mission federation president is elected all these duties are performed by the conference/mission personal ministries director and the office secretary.

Helps

Officers of the federations should be informed along all lines of Dorcas Society and center activity. They should master the *Community Services Manual*, be careful students of *Welfare Ministry* and of *The Ministry of Healing*. “A Call to Medical Evangelism,” a leaflet by Ellen G. White obtainable from the Adventist Book Center, and *The Ministry of Healing* are helpful in understanding the health phase of the work. A list of health-educational materials is available from the Health Ministries Department of the General Conference.

The Community Services program of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is an integral and inseparable part not only of the Department of Personal Ministries but of the faith and life of every believer.