



# Mission Group Process

## Part Six: Seeking Partnerships

Working with Jesus

**iFOLLOW**

The iFollow Discipleship Series

## About the iFollow Discipleship Series Pastor's Edition

### Categories

The iFollow Discipleship Series is designed to be used in congregations to assist people in their pursuit of God. This assumes that individuals are in unique places in their journey and there is no perfect set of lessons that everyone must complete to become a disciple—in fact discipleship is an eternal journey. Therefore the iFollow curriculum is a menu of milestones that an individual, small group, or even an entire church can choose from. The lessons can be placed in three general categories: **Meeting with Jesus** (does not assume a commitment to Jesus Christ); **Walking with Jesus** (assumes an acceptance of Jesus Christ); and **Working with Jesus** (assumes a desire to serve Jesus Christ).

### Components

Each lesson has a presenter's manuscript which can be read word for word, but will be stronger if the presenter puts it in his/her own words and uses personal illustrations. The graphic slides can be played directly from the Pastor's DVD or customized and played from a computer. There are also several group activities and discussion questions to choose from as well as printable student handouts.

### Usage

The lessons are designed to be used in small groups, pastor's Bible classes, prayer meetings, seminars, retreats, training sessions, discussion groups, and some lessons may be appropriate sermon outlines.

### Credits

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## Mission Group Process, Part Six: Seeking Partnerships

*This is the last in a series of six units designed to provide the preparation and training necessary to launch a mission group.*

### Learning Objectives

1. Understand the various systems and organizations in the community
2. Study Romans 13 to find New Testament principles for relationships with civic leaders
3. Learn the basic process of developing collaborations with other organizations
4. Deal with the issues involved in identity and positioning of your ministry

### Content Outline

1. The importance of collaboration in community-based ministry
2. Identity issues for Adventist mission groups and ministries
3. Potential partners—community systems and specific organizations
4. The process of developing a collaborative project

### Background Material for the Presenter

Collaboration is vital to the development and effectiveness of your missional project. Without collaboration you will not get people from the target group to come into your project, you will not have a suitable location to work in or any of the supplies, materials and funding you need. Without collaboration you will find it difficult to provide the training your volunteers need and the additional services that people may require as you discover health, emotional and other needs in their lives. And without collaboration your project will certainly not gain the visibility and credibility in the community that you want it to have.

Today the business world recognizes that no entrepreneur can succeed without building strong collaborative relationships with suppliers, customers and distribution systems. In the world of community action this has always been true, although sometimes Adventists are

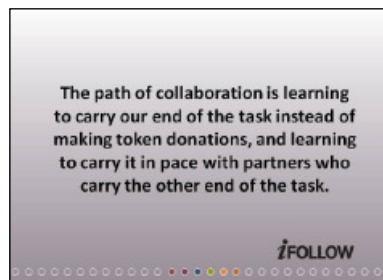


iFollow  
Discipleship  
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Working  
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Mission  
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Part Six:  
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nerships

1

slow to recognize the need for partnerships and slow to understand how effective partnerships are structured. The temptation to “do it ourselves” can be just as self-defeating as the temptation to “let’s just support some community organization and let them do it.” The path of collaboration is learning to carry our end of the task instead of making token donations, and learning to carry it in pace with partners who carry the other end of the task.



Adventists are involved in national and international partnerships through Adventist Community Services (ACS) and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). For example, ACS is part of the Alliance for Youth founded by Gen. Colin Powell at the Presidents’ Summit in April, 1997, in Philadelphia. The NAD Health Ministries Department is part of the Health Screening Council and the National Free Clinic Coordinating Committee. ACS has a written agreement for cooperation with the American Red Cross and with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), as well as with parallel agencies of the governments of Canada and Bermuda. ADRA country offices around the world have similar written agreements with the national government, various non-governmental organizations and local authorities in some areas. Your local project may benefit by being connected to one of these national partnerships by affiliation with the national office of ACS or other entities at the North American Division office.

What are the benefits? One example is that if your local project is affiliated with ACS or ADRA, then you become eligible to join state and metro-area Alliance for Youth meetings and networks where various kinds of resources—information, training, volunteers, funding and in-kind donations—are announced and decisions made about distribution. All 50 of the state governors were at the Presidents’ Summit and brought key representatives from their own staff and from state headquarters of major nonprofit organizations. In addition, more than 100 mayors attended the Presidents’ Summit and each brought with them a 10-person “community team” which included key government officials and representatives from nonprofit agencies. When the delegations went home from the Summit, they were charged to “consult widely with others throughout their community” in the implementation of the Alliance for Youth goals. (See the “Community Teams” document listed in Resources section below.) Local designees of the Points of Light Foundation and the Corporation for National Service, in partnership with the local United Way, were the conveners prior to the Summit. These same players were asked to continue to convene regular meetings of all of the interested partners in their local area. “The challenge to every local community is to map out and act upon the distinctive combinations of local assets that will help it achieve the goals that it seeks. ... Our plan is to bring a new and increased focus to the role of citizen service, particularly as it can help ensure that all of our youth have access to the five fundamental goals.”

The document circulated in Philadelphia recognized that “the Summit will affirm the work already being done,” but the primary purpose of the Summit was to “stimulate new efforts,” and the document says, “We must look differently at one another and at our organizations. Any inventory of the true resources and the potential activities of a community will reveal surprising strengths. In the end, it may be the contribution of those who are most often overlooked that provides the difference between accomplishing any of the goals and accomplishing none.” All of this opens the door for you to establish important relationships locally. And this kind of networking is duplicated in almost every area of interest.

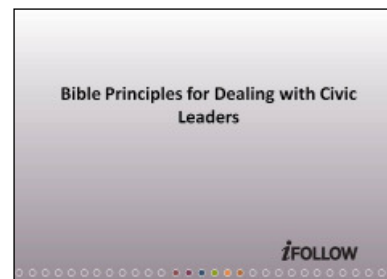
Recognizing that Adventists are new players in most communities, national representatives from ACS and ADRA met with Sen. Harris Wofford, chief executive officer of the Corporation for National Service, immediately after the 1997 Summit. He expressed strong affirmation of the fact that the Adventists were attempting to initiate new projects and bring new activity to the table. A number of the large, national organizations that participated in the Presidents’ Summit simply used it as a stage to promote operations they already had underway and did not attempt to launch much new work. The Adventists were creating new tutoring projects and this was appreciated by civic leaders. Pastor Jose Rojas, director of volunteerism for the North American Division, was subsequently honored for this contribution at an event at the White House.

## Bible Principles for Dealing with Civic Leaders

In Romans 13 the New Testament deals very specifically and clearly with the topic of how Christians are to relate to government officials. The same principles can be applied to all civic leaders in a community.

1. Verse one states that believers “must submit ... to the governing authorities.” (NIV) Paul is referring here to the civil government leadership in the city of Rome and the local governments throughout the Roman Empire that drew their authority from appointment by the officials in Rome. These were, at that time, not Christians. In fact they were pagans who believed in many things and did many things that were in direct conflict with the teachings of Jesus. Yet, this verse says that such leaders are to be respected. The same principle is re-stated in Titus 3:1.

2. In the last part of verse one, Paul explains the reason for the principle of respecting civic leaders: “there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.” Daniel 2:21 states that God “sets up kings and deposes them.” In past history these texts were used to teach a doctrine of “the Divine right of kings” which indicated that rulers who inherited dictatorial powers should



not be replaced by democratic forms of government. It is clear that this principle applies even more to elected officials who have greater legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens. People who have leadership roles in the community have important tasks necessary to maintaining the order and welfare of the town, city or county. This civic life is something that God ordains and supports.

3. “Consequently,” reads verse two, taking Paul’s argument to the next step, “he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted.” Christians are to live at peace with the established order in the community, unless it requires the believer to do something directly in opposition to the will of God. Early Christians refused to pray to the Romans emperor or engage in rituals that recognized him as divine, although they supported the civic and national leadership role of the emperors. Christians have a God-given duty to support and encourage good civic affairs in the communities where they live. In a democracy, it is logical to extend this to a requirement that believers go to the polls and vote. In a typical local community, it means that Christians must be proactive in participating in the civic life of the community, cooperating with civic leaders to achieve goals that are important to God.

4. “This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor” (verses 6-7). These verses make it clear that God expects more from believers than simply to avoid breaking the law. Christians are to be part of the civic life of the community in every way.

“**Taxes**” refer to the legally-required funds that citizens must pay to support the operation of government. Christians should not try to avoid taxes or cheat the government out of money, even if they oppose the spending policies of the current elected officials.

“**Revenues**” translates a word different than “taxes.” This word, in the original Greek, refers to a different kind of tax or “customs duties” levied on goods being shipped into a city or nation or carried along a road. Some scholars have suggested that this may be a veiled reference to the additional payments that corrupt officials of the time required in order to do specific things. In many parts of the world today it is still necessary to pay a bribe or “tip” a government official in order to get the most basic permit or document stamped or notarized, or any other routine governmental transaction. Again, the point of Paul’s teaching here is that Christians are to be fully engaged in the civic life of the community, not reserved or marginal.

“**Respect**” refers to the negative aspect of respecting authorities. It literally means to fear the authorities, not in the sense of emotion as much as in the sense of being realistic about their capacity to punish. This refers to the required level of respect that must be given to established authority figures whether or not we like them as persons.



**“Honor”** refers to an even greater level of respect than the basic requirement. “In Paul’s time the agents of the Roman government who were empowered to collect taxes and customs were, to the Jews at least, the object of popular hatred and contempt. Therefore, Paul’s counsel to the believers in Rome that they should not only submit to taxation but also give due honor and respect to their rulers was in striking contrast [to this] sentiment. ...” (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* on this text). Again, Paul expands the basic notion of required participation in government to teach a more proactive involvement with civic leaders and organizations.

Based on this text, the official position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is clearly spelled out in the *Church Manual* chapter on church standards. The standard for “Community Relationships” is this:

While our “citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour” (Phil. 3:20, RV), we are yet in the world as an integral part of human society, and must share with our fellows certain responsibilities in the common problems of life. In every community where they live Seventh-day Adventists, as children of God, should be recognized as outstanding citizens in their Christian integrity and in working for the common good of all. While our highest responsibility is to the church and its commission to preach the gospel of the kingdom to all the world, we should support by our service and our means, as far as possible and consistent, all proper efforts for social order and betterment. Even though we must stand apart from all political and social strife, we should always, quietly and firmly, maintain an uncompromising stand for justice and right in civic affairs, along with strict adherence to our religious convictions. It is our sacred responsibility to be loyal citizens of the governments to which we belong, rendering “unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21).

This standard gives clear direction to the involvement of Mission Groups in the civic life of local communities. It provides clear principles under which partnerships can be embraced and positively developed.

## Our Role and Identity

When you enter into a demanding and productive relationship, it is important that you have a strong sense of who you are and what you bring to the relationship. As you enter into these community-based partnerships, it is vital that you bring with you a strong sense of the identity and role of the Adventist agencies which you represent—who we are and what we are about! Weak self-identity will result in dysfunctional partnerships.

The professional literature defines collaboration as “the process by which several agencies or organizations make



a formal, sustained commitment to work together to accomplish a common purpose. Collaboration requires a commitment to participate in shared decision-making, and allocation of resources related to activities responding to mutually identified needs.” Partnership is a more informal and general term, which does not necessarily mean a formal collaborative process. (*The Community Collaboration Manual*, p 1)

This means that when you go to meet with civic leaders or participate in meetings where a collaborative process is being discussed, you represent an organization. Individuals do not participate as individuals in collaborative projects. The participation of individuals is valid and acceptable only when they are officially empowered to speak for an organization.

**Which organization do you speak for?** The Seventh-day Adventist Church has delegated to ADRA and ACS, its humanitarian organizations, the responsibility of acting as the agent for Adventism in community action, so the only agency empowered to speak for the Adventist Church in collaborative community action meetings is either ACS (in the U.S.) or ADRA (in other countries). When you contact civic leaders or go to meetings, you represent ACS, no matter what your local project or organization is called. You do not need to use the name ACS for your ministry; local ACS units are free to use whatever name they choose to adopt. What is important is that you present yourself as *representing a charitable organization sponsored by the church*, and *not* as representing a local church or the denomination itself.



Why is this distinction important? For a variety of reasons: The most vital to you is that, typically, staff in community organizations and government agencies tend to see “church people” in a different way than they do sister agencies. Churches are seen as sources of funding, not entities to which funds are given. Churches are seen as sources of volunteers, not agencies to which volunteers are loaned. Churches are seen as lenders of space and equipment, not borrowers of space and equipment. So when you go looking for resources that you will need, if you introduce yourself as being “from the Adventist Church,” they will immediately put you in a category that is a donor, not a receiver, and you will likely not get what you are asking for. But, if you introduce yourself as being “from Adventist Community Services, a nonprofit charity,” they will put you in a category as a potential receiver of funding, facilities, etc.

Those are not the only reasons why this distinction is important. Because of the traditional position that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has taken to keep free of entanglement with government funding and to stay away from ecumenical organizations, you do not have authorization to represent the church in many collaborative processes. And your pastor and church board do not have the authority to give you that authorization, even



if they think they do. At some point in the future, this might cause a real problem. If you register your local project with the ACS office at the North American Division (by simply going on line at the ACS website and filling out an annual report), then you are authorized to enter into most collaborative processes, so long as you follow the guidelines. And you have an 800 number you can call if you feel that you need guidance in what to agree to in the collaboration.

Both ADRA and ACS are separately incorporated as charitable organizations sponsored by the Adventist Church and specifically authorized to accept outside funding, enter into collaborative agreements, etc. ACS includes both church-based units along the lines of the food pantries that many local churches operate or the traditional Dorcas Society, and community-based units like your project.

ACS made a commitment to the Alliance for Youth in 1997 *on behalf* of the Adventist Church, acting as the *agency sponsored by* the church. Similar commitments have been made to the Red Cross, FEMA, state governors and other national agencies. The mission of ACS is “to serve the poor and hurting in Christ’s name.” It is a “non-sectarian, faith-based” charitable organization, incorporated in the District of Columbia and recognized by the U.S. government under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code.

“Non-sectarian” means that ACS units provide services to the general public without regard to religion, race, gender, etc. It does not engage in programs that primarily or exclusively help Adventist members, and it does not engage in programs that exclude Adventist members. It is vital that your local project be structured in such a way that people from church-related households and people from non-church-related households have equal opportunity to participate. For example, information about your community services needs to be distributed widely outside church circles.

“Faith-based” means that ACS is driven by a definite belief in the compassion of Jesus Christ and is sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Members of the church form the primary constituency of the organization and take the responsibility for raising the funds for ACS operations and services. The constituency that elects the board for each ADRA country office and each ACS Affiliate agency is appointed by the church at some level. This provides an “arms-length” structure that is free to accept outside funding and enter into collaborative arrangements which the church itself cannot, while at the same time ensuring that ADRA and ACS are faithful to the values and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## Identity and Role of Other Partners

Your community can be understood from a systems approach. It consists of a number of complex, inter-related systems that sustain the necessary elements which make it possible for people to live in this place; jobs, housing, utilities, transportation, communications,

security and order, education, health care, recreation, family and social services, justice and religious institutions.

“The sheltered religious world in which most pastors live and work,” says Dr. Stanley J. Hallet, an evangelical theologian in Chicago, “is often vastly different from the rough and troubled secular world of their parishioners. This difference of pulpit and pew worlds can result in irrelevant preaching, insensitive pastoral care, and unrealistic expectations of parishioners.” (*Urban Ministry News Notes*, Spring 1992) Unfortunately, lay leaders and church boards often accept this more narrow view. One of the major reasons for a Mission Group is to take the mission of Christ out into this larger world, so developing relationships with other organizations is a key part of any missionary project.

**Government**—Often the most visible community system because it defines the boundaries and name of a community, there are at least three layers of government below the state level—county, municipal and specific-purpose—and these levels interact with each other in ways that may not be readily apparent to most people. Of course, each state defines the role of each of these levels somewhat differently and may use more refined or slightly different terminology than these concise descriptions:

**County** government is administrative in nature, an extension of the state government. The county typically has departments for roads, airports and mass transit, as well as public works, property tax administration, planning, public welfare (or human resources), health and mental health. The county sheriff is in charge of the county jail operated on behalf of the county and municipal courts. The county clerk’s office is where marriage licenses, birth certificates and deaths are officially recorded.

**Municipal** government—city, town or village—is defined by state law, often based on different “classes” or sizes of cities and towns. Municipalities typically provide police and fire services, maintain streets, operate water and sewer systems, manage parks and provide recreation programs, enforce zoning, issue building permits and inspect existing structures to make sure they are maintained safely, regulate parking, and enforce safety regulations.

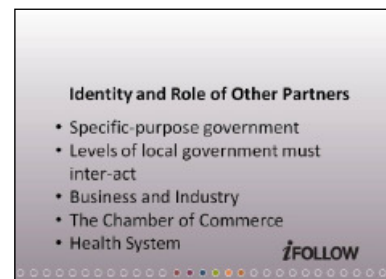
Town and city government provides many opportunities for positive contact and cooperation by local churches and ministries. The mayor’s ceremonial role is extensive. He or she is potentially available to promote or make an appearance at almost any community event that is not partisan or clearly religious in nature. Mayors are often happy to have their picture taken participating in a community health screening event or to participate in the ribbon-cutting to open a new community service center, for example. (Of course, plans for such appointments must be made with the mayor’s staff months in advance and proper protocol followed.)



Other key opportunities for you to seek collaboration with city government include such bodies as a Human Relations Commission, Community Relations Commission, Community Advisory Board, or Youth Commission. When municipal governments form bodies such as these, religious leaders are often sought out, along with representatives from nonprofit social service agencies, to participate. If you are willing to get involved and help with the goals of such a group, it will open the door to strong working relationships—even friendships—with key city officials.

**Specific-purpose government**—These are government entities that are not departments of the state, county or city. The most common example is the Public School District. In most places in the U.S., schools are operated separately from the municipal or county governments by elected school boards which operate school districts under the authority of state law. The elected members of school boards are part-time volunteers who attend weekly meeting. The district superintendent is a paid, full-time professional administrator who serves as the chief executive officer of the schools. Other type of specific-purpose government include economic development agencies, public housing authorities, airport commissions, port authority or mass transit agencies, regional parks, and many other kinds of public agencies.

The various **levels of local government must inter-act** in order to achieve their individual purposes. The constituencies they serve overlap and they are often involved in what could be conflicting activities. Often there is a council of governments or association of governments in a metropolitan area or rural region. This type of organization is *not* official; not a government entity. It is a professional association made up of the governments—county, municipal, specific-purpose and sometimes state—in a defined territory. It is primarily involved in sharing information and providing a forum for the unofficial discussion of regional issues.



**Business and Industry**—Communities form around economic needs. For example, your community may have started because of a river or seaport, or simply a place where traders met trappers once a year to purchase animal pelts or some other natural resource. What industries are important to your community? Where are the largest numbers of people employed? Is it a “bedroom” community from which the majority of the employed adults commute to other places for work? Or, is it a community well-known for providing a certain kind of business service or handling certain kinds of products? The economy of your community is key to the lives of most of the people you are attempting to reach and serve.

**The Chamber of Commerce** is the organization that represents the business system in your community. It probably has a manager, a paid employee who is active in community affairs. This a good starting point in establishing contact and gathering information in the community. Where the Chamber of Commerce leadership has developed relationships

over the years and is politically astute, it may be quite visible in speaking up on behalf of the business community on a variety of local issues. More likely, such public statements are few and far between and issued only after the internal organization has carefully processed them. In fact, the Chamber has no regulatory authority over business. It is simply a nonprofit association that provides a channel for recognition, sharing information, networking relationships and mobilizing opinion.

**Health System**—Health care is an “industry” going through significant change at the current time. It is also an arena in which the Adventist Church has a long and well-established role through some 50 hospitals and other health care facilities that the church sponsors in North America as well as Loma Linda University. A significant percentage of Adventist Church members work in health care and local congregations have traditionally conducted health screening and promotion programs for the community as well as their own members.

**Hospitals** represent the most visible element of the health care delivery system in your community. Because of efforts on the part of government, large employers and insurance companies to reduce the cost of health care, there is a good chance for your Mission Group to develop a partnership with a local hospital. Perhaps you organize health promotion classes taught by professionals from the hospital. If health screening programs and a regular schedule of health education is provided, the hospital might be willing to help you develop a neighborhood wellness center. This kind of collaboration can give you access to professionals that you may not have in your congregation, and when the hospital lends its name to your health program, it may be easier to market the program and attract good attendance.

**Community mental health centers** are a specific kind of community clinic specializing in addictions and other mental health needs. The medical director is usually a psychiatrist, and there are often psychologists, psychiatric nurses, social workers and paraprofessional community workers on the staff. These centers have become more important with the increasing movement to “deinstitutionalize” care for people with mental health problems. Today large numbers of individuals who prior to 1970 would have spent their lives in state mental hospitals are instead living in the community. These people get regular treatment and medications from community mental health centers.

**Public health authorities** include those who have regulatory oversight for hospitals, health practitioners and other health care organizations, as well as those who are involved in providing certain kinds of services and addressing public health problems such as contaminated drinking water, cleanliness of eating establishments, etc. The U.S. Public Health Service is headed by the Surgeon-General of the United States, the top doctor in the country. State and county governments also have health departments that are generally



involved in the funding of health care, licensing of hospitals, nursing homes, clinics and other facilities, as well as setting goals for health promotion. Currently, they are involved in spending large sums of money that come from the tobacco companies under various legal settlements and are targeted to educate children and teens against smoking. Some Adventist groups have been given funds to distribute educational materials, conduct stop smoking programs and provide speakers at public schools, youth centers, etc.

**Health promotion organizations** include nonprofit groups such as the American Cancer Society, Heart Association, Lung Association, etc. Your community probably has a local chapter of several of these disease-specific organizations. Each of them has an array of preventive programs, educational materials and speakers. Because of the concern that Adventists have about many of these health issues, these organizations can be useful allies. They are usually happy to provide you with resources for your health education activities and like to get involved in community health fairs, etc. There are even greater opportunities for cooperation and visibility in the community.



The **county medical society** and related health professional groups play a powerful role in representing doctors, dentists and other health practitioners. These groups do not have any legal authority, but they are very influential. Most Adventist doctors belong to the county medical society in their community, and in some cases serve as officers in the organization. If you can obtain the approval or endorsement of the county medical society for your health projects, it will open many doors for referrals, distribution of brochures, etc.

**School System**—Public schools are operated by school districts who hire the principals and teachers, provide textbooks and supplies, etc. The principals of the local schools in your community likely have regular meetings with a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or advisory committee. They know that they need community support. Parochial schools are operated by religious groups, including the Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopal and Quaker (“Friends”) faiths. Schools with the generic label “Christian” may in some cases be sponsored by a local Baptist church. There are other private schools which have no religious affiliation. In some cases these are actually for-profit organizations, but usually they are nonprofit institutions and provide a high-priced service for elite families willing to pay. “Charter” schools are being experimented with in more and more states. These are really public schools, funded entirely or in large part from government funds, but under a “charter” or contract, the school district allows them to be operated by a local group that functions in much the same way as a nonprofit organization. Tutoring programs for underprivileged or at-risk children provide opportunities for your Mission Group to cooperate with the public schools in your community.

**Higher education institutions** include community college that are operated by local governments to bring higher education to large numbers of people, and these campuses provide an opportunity for campus ministry. State universities are usually massive institutions and there are only a few communities in each state where these campuses exist. If a state university is located in your community, it is likely a major industry with many of the residents employed by the university. Have you inquired to find out how many Adventist students are on campus? With permission from the student activities office, you can assist these students in the formation of an Adventist campus ministry fellowship. Where these ministries function, often on Friday evenings, significant numbers of young adults from Adventist homes are touched who might otherwise slip away unseen. There are also evangelistic opportunities in secular campus ministry. A private college or university may be present in your community. These are often smaller than state universities and do not so dominate in the community.



**Public Utilities** are for-profit corporations that supply electrical power and natural gas and are regulated by a government agency. The Public Utilities Commission in each state has authority to set limits on the rates charged and establish rules about how the power companies related to customers. These are usually not local companies in your community, but large corporations that cover several states. In some cities the power and/or gas utilities are owned and operated by the municipal government. Water and sewer services are more likely to be operated by the county or municipal government, or by a special-purpose government entity. Do you know who provides these services in your community?

**The Nonprofit Sector**—Services to families in crisis, the poor and homeless, children, youth, the aged and others are provided in large part by nonprofit organizations in your community. Some services are provided by government agencies and a substantial share of the funding comes from government, although the overall governmental role has been decreasing for more than two decades. “The nonprofit professional has emerged as both the embodiment of civic involvement and a significant source of how it is now defined.” (Wuthnow, p 47) Across the country, the number of nonprofit organizations has grown from 309,000 in 1967 to some two million today. More than 18 million people are employed by nonprofits and more than 100 million serve as volunteers. Your community is served by two or three dozen nonprofits or more. A few are quite visible, while others are largely unknown.



**Large, national agencies** have branches in almost every community. This includes the Salvation Army, Red Cross, YMCA, Urban League, Catholic Charities, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts and others.

These are established, powerful organizations with strong support bases that they have developed over a history of 100 years or more. These are well-regarded, well-known community institutions.

A growing number of *small, local organizations* also operate in your community. When you get a complete list and carefully read the descriptions of the mission and programs of each, you will be surprised. Each of these agencies will have a narrow, specialized focus—either in type of services provided or in a relatively small geographic territory or ethnic or cultural segment served—and most have only one, two or three paid staff with perhaps 30 to 50 active volunteers at any given time. In about 200 communities across North America, an Adventist Community Services center is among these agencies, recognized locally as a community-based charity and not just a church activity.

There is probably some type of *community coordinating council* in your community. These entities operate under a wide variety of names, and some may be affiliated with the United Way, while others are free-standing groups. Each has the purpose of providing a forum where the directors of the nonprofit social service agencies can come together to coordinate their programs, confer on important community issues and cooperate in strategic planning. Some of these councils also provide in-service education for nonprofit professionals and may from time to time broker large block grants which provide funding for several agencies.

**The United Way** or Community Chest organization is a joint fund-raising operation which also gets involved in planning processes to identify community needs and develop a specific “cause” for the funds to be raised. Your community probably has a United Way organization or is part of one that covers the larger metropolitan area. It specializes in “workplace giving,” in which large employers are asked by the United Way to urge all of their employees to agree to have a small percentage deducted from their pay checks as a donation to United Way. Traditionally, the large, national agencies and perhaps a few of the smaller, local organizations were “members” of United Way and only those organizations got a percentage of the funds raised. In recent years this traditional pattern has begun to change as more donors want to designate where the funds they donate go, and most (but not all) local United Way organizations have begun to pass through donations to any tax-exempt, charitable organization that is designated by a donor. Also, local United Way organizations have begun to allocate a portion of the funds raised based on an assessment of unmet needs and community priorities. Qualified nonprofits who are not “members” of the United Way may get grants from these “priority” funds if they present proposals that address the goals developed by the United Way planning group. As a result, some local United Way organizations no longer designate “member” agencies.

There is a **Voluntary Action Center** in hundreds of communities across America. This is a nonprofit organization that specializes in recruiting volunteers for all of the



other nonprofits and volunteer programs in the community. It is a “clearing-house” where volunteer groups can post their specific needs and individuals can go to find out what is needed or where various kinds of specific skills are needed. The national umbrella organization for the Voluntary Action Centers is the Points of Light Foundation in Washington D.C. This foundation takes its name from the first President Bush’s famous statement about “a thousand points of light,” referring to the activities of volunteers in community service. It continues to give each year the “Points of Light Awards.” The Voluntary Action Center can be a good place for you to find supplemental help for large community service projects. It will also provide leadership training events for nonprofit executives and boards that can be very helpful to your local ministry.

**Religion**—In addition to congregations of various faiths, there are interfaith organizations in your community. The *Ministerial Association* is an informal gathering of the pastors and religious leaders in the community. It is not an ecumenical organization and usually does not make statements on theological, ethical or political issues.

Other than providing a monthly get-together where pastors can meet one another and chat, most ministerial associations accomplish no more than perhaps sponsoring a joint Thanksgiving Eve worship event with rotates among the churches in town. The Seventh-day Adventist Church ministerial department has long recommended that Adventist pastors participate in local ministerial associations, and in some communities Adventist ministers have played key roles in local groups.

There may also be a **Council of Churches**, an organization which is made up of congregations, not individuals. Each member congregation sends several pastoral and lay delegates to the council, depending on size. There are dues to be paid, and often the council has a part-time or full-time staff director. A newer interfaith structure is a *community ministry organization* which will have a mix of individuals and congregations among its constituents, and may ask for donations from congregations or pastors who do not wish to become regular members. This is usually takes the form of a faith-based community service agency, engaged in operating a homeless shelter or emergency assistance for families in need. It may also tackle other social issues, such as civil rights or minorities or environmental clean-up. The extent to which one of these organizations may provide opportunities for collaboration in your community depends entirely on what activities and goals it may be involved in and how those relate to your mission.

**The Media**—This is “the information age,” and communication media have become one of the most powerful systems in local communities. This is especially true for any organization, like the Adventist Church, which has a message to convey to the public. Understanding the media in your community is a vital element in finding an effective mission strategy. The media are powerful primarily because they set the “agenda” for conversations and issues in your community. Community leaders probably do not rely on the media as





the key source for their information—as do most residents—but they do react to issues raised in the media and seek to use the media to convey their own views. Unless an organization or cause appears in the news, it is not considered significant by most community leaders and residents. In this sense, the media become the “gatekeepers” for community life, or at least for who is among the known “players” in the community.

**Newspapers and other periodicals** are traditionally the most visible and localized media, although over recent decades the number of publications has declined and total readership has slipped. Large cities typically have a daily paper with an extra-large edition, which is more widely circulated, on Sundays. Suburban towns and rural counties usually have a weekly newspaper which is often circulated free of charge to every home. The largest metropolitan areas also have slick, monthly magazines and a proliferation of specialized publications for the business community, legal affairs, labor unions, major religions and even the homeless. All of these are potential carriers of your local church’s messages.

**Broadcasting and cable media** have become the contemporary mass media. In your community it is likely that far more people listen to the radio or watch television than read a newspaper each day. In metropolitan areas there are typically several broadcast stations and cable systems today carry a hundred channels or more. Most of these cover an audience throughout the metropolitan area, and it is difficult to target messages specifically to your local community. In small towns and rural areas, there is often no television station and only one or two radio stations. These small town radio stations are much more oriented to the local community, as are some suburban radio stations.

**Outdoor advertising** is another key channel for providing information in your community. In most metropolitan areas, one or two companies control all or most of the billboards. These are rented to advertisers for a month at a time, although most providers prefer a longer contract covering several months. The advertiser can usually place the billboards in specific neighborhoods and along specific routes. In urban areas the mass transit system and even taxi companies carry advertising too. Bus cards, posters in transit stations and small panels inside subways and buses are all available for a price. Outdoor advertising companies do provide a limited amount of free, public service space for local nonprofit organizations. The rules about who qualifies and how to get consideration for public service ads seem to be different in each metropolitan area, but none of these companies consider religion to be a public service. Public service ads are only available for community service or health education programs. Some companies require the nonprofit agency to cover the cost of printing the ads or offer only a steeply discounted rate, not free ads.

**Direct mail and telemarketing** are universally “hated” by all kinds of people, but they still work. In fact, this is the most cost effective medium for organizations with small budgets for advertising. The advertiser has considerable control over this kind of communication



and it can be targeted directly to particular neighborhoods or even specific postal carrier routes. The various direct advertising media are usually managed by specialized companies that you can find listed in the Yellow Pages under “advertising” or “direct mail” or “mail houses” or “telemarketing.” Direct mail can be used by your Mission Group without the assistance of a media company because excellent information has been published in professional books and tools are available from a number of sources. (See the bibliography at the end of this unit.) Because it gets results with relatively small investments in time and money, direct mail advertising is the most practical communication medium available to your ministry. That is why it is widely used in public evangelism, seminar outreach, etc.

### **Where do we fit in?**

The wide array of services provided by various organizations is outlined in Handout 1. Discussion is needed to determine where the church and various Mission Groups that are already underway or being planned might fit into this picture. This is an important discussion because the whole purpose of a Mission Group is to get into the picture and off the side-lines where the church is usually positioned.



### **How Community Collaborations Are Built**

There are widely-understand protocols and a standard process that community action professionals are used to. If you want to enter into a partnership with one or more organizations in your community, you will have to work with civic and business leaders who are used to this process (as well as some who are not), and conduct yourself in a professional manner.

*The first stage* in the development of a collaboration involves working with individuals one to one. In order to bring people together in a collaborative process, you must first talk to key leaders individually and seek their support and participation. The first reaction you will get from each person you talk to is to ask who else is interested; who else have you talked to? Don't interpret this as reluctance or resistance, or behavior designed to freeze you out as a new face among community leaders. Experienced community leaders know how many different organizations and which leaders it will take to make a success of a particular collaborative concept. Try to ask each leader, "Who else should I talk to about this idea?" before they ask you, "Who have you talked to?"

Before the first meeting of any group to explore the possibility of collaboration, careful attention must be given to who will be the initiator of the official invitation to the meeting,



and which organizations and leaders should be invited to the meeting. Resist the temptation to send out invitations too soon. If you invite a number of leaders to a meeting and no one comes, you will have seriously damaged your ability to get into collaborative relationships. And, when the invitations do go out, please keep in mind that they must be made both officially (in writing) and unofficially (through personal contact), and the timing of the meeting must be carefully selected so leaders have sufficient time to think about participation, check with others in their organization, etc.

The right convener or host and an effective facilitator for the exploratory meeting or meetings are essential to a successful collaboration. The process in the meeting must involve everyone who attends, and lead each organization to state its self-interest in the possible collaboration. Good partnerships are “win/win” situations where everyone gains something for their organization.

The function of these early meetings is to write a shared vision statement of what might result from a collaborative effort, define the desired outcomes and develop a simple proposal document the participating leaders can take back to their organizations. This becomes the proposal for collaboration; the “charter” upon which the proposed collaboration can be based.

*The second stage* in collaboration is when the leaders involved in the early meetings take the proposal back to their boards and committees for approval. A letter of commitment or a vote of approval for a Memorandum of Understanding must be recorded within your organization and within the other agencies. You can expect that conflicts will arise and additional meetings will be necessary to clarify the issues and work out resolutions to the concerns and conflicts. Some kind of ongoing entity must be agreed to with the authority to resolve future conflicts, or the collaboration may soon fall apart.

*The third stage* in collaboration includes the formal meetings where voted representatives from the collaborating organizations come together and begin to implement the plan. Obviously, if the collaboration is rather simple in scope and involves only two or three organizations, this will be quite simple. In fact, for a simple collaboration most of the work is done by the time you get to stage three.

*The fourth and last stage* in collaboration is when the partner organizations, working together, begin to jointly impact the community. The collaborative program now exists and begins to be productive. Of course there will be a need for evaluation of the partnership from time to time, and opportunities to celebrate the results of working together.

## An Easier Way?

Someone in your group will very likely suggest, “Why



don't we just help the organizations that are already doing something about this? Why start a new program of our own?"

It is a good thing for Adventist members to volunteer in various community organizations, but it will not result in making a visible statement that the Adventist Church is interested in being a good neighbor and making a contribution in the community. Even if tens of thousands of Adventist members volunteer in other community organizations, it will never change the scores in the survey of public awareness. The average American sees a difference between what is done by an organization to sponsor and develop a program in the community, and what is done by individuals. What is done by individual church members who volunteer in other organizations "doesn't count" in the view of the public. There is clearly a difference between a project in which the church takes the time, trouble and treasure to organize and develop an ongoing program, and a project in which the church simply asks its members to go help somebody else's program.

Some will undoubtedly hear the paragraph above and say, "we shouldn't be in it for the glory." And they are correct. We are in it because we want to make a difference in the lives of people; because the compassion of Jesus Christ calls us to make a statement in His name by reaching out to help these children. And we want community leaders, professionals in the public schools, mayor and governors, and everyone to know that we are not in it for the glory, but we are "in it" sincerely, as an organization and for the long haul! You can make that happen, if you are willing to take the time and trouble to be a player and not just a cheer leader.

## Handouts in this Package

1. Defining the Scope of Community Services



iFollow  
Discipleship  
Series:  
Working  
with Jesus

Action Plan  
& Presenter  
Notes

Mission  
Group  
Process  
Part Six:  
Seeking Part-  
nerships

18

## Additional Resources

Calkins, Ann (1998). *How to Place Newspaper Advertising*. AdventSource.

Calkins, Ann (1999). *How to Place Radio Ads*. AdventSource.

Calkins, Ann (1999) *How to Place Television Ads*. AdventSource.

Dudley, Roger L., Bruce Wrenn and Slimen Saliba, "Who Are(n't) We Reaching?" *Ministry*, April 1989, pages 4-8.

Dunkin, Steve (1982). *Church Advertising: A Practical Guide*. Abingdon Press.

Mueller, Walter (1989). *Direct Mail Ministry*. Abingdon Press.

No author (1993). *The Community Collaboration Manual*. New York City: The National  
Some of these resources are from secular authors and publishers. They are consistent with basic Bible values, although in some details they need modification for your use.

Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations.

Sahlin, Monte (2004). *Understanding Your Community*. Lincoln, NE: Center for Creative Ministry.

Wuthnow, Robert (1998). *Loose Connections*. Harvard University Press.

## Other Media

Rittenour, Curtis (1995) *Welcome Home*. Lincoln, NE; Center for Creative Ministry.  
*Welcome Home* provides newspaper ads and full media packages for eight special-event Sabbaths, including Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, Mother's Day and the back-to-school season.

Adventist Media Services, *Seventh-day Adventist Awareness Spots*, a 14-minute video explaining how to use the Adventist Awareness television spots produced by the North American Division (available from AdventSource)

"Community Teams," document distributed at the Presidents' Summit on the Future of America, April 27-29, 1997, Philadelphia (1997, The Alliance for Youth, Alexandria)

## Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important for a Mission Group to enter into partnerships with various organizations in the community?
2. What principles can be found in Romans 13 relative to relationships with local government?
3. How does the step-by-step process of developing partnerships (outlined in the presentations and handouts) result in strong, productive relationships?
4. Which of these steps would also apply to partnerships with other Adventist organizations?
5. Which organizations in our area would be relevant to the particular mission or missions we are contemplating?
6. How might communication be developed with one or more of these organizations?

## Group Activity

**Purpose:** To practice the skills involved in developing relationships with civic leaders and partnerships with community organizations.

**Preparations:** Make signs for each of the civic leader roles such as Mayor, director of United Way, Superintendent of Public Schools, director of the Chamber of Commerce, chairman of the Ministerial Association, director of the Family Services Agency, manager of a TV station, editor of the daily newspaper, president of the local bank, etc. These might be “tents” placed on the table in front of them or name badges that they wear on strings around their necks, etc. It might also save time to copy a sheet describing what the mission of the Mission Group is and the specific goals of the program they want to implement.

**Assignment:** This is a role-playing game. Divide the group into two teams, each with about half the group. One team is to play a Mission Group that wants to develop partnerships in the community in order to implement a community-based ministry. The second team is to play the role of various civic leaders, using the labels or signs above.

**Time:** 1. For the first 20 minutes have the two teams meet separately. The Mission Group team needs to decide on a strategy of what they want to try to develop with each of the civic leaders, how they want to implement their ministry in the community, and what they want to get from various community agencies in terms of help, funding, etc. Specific assignments need to be given to individuals as to who is going to approach whom among the civic leaders.

2. During this same time, the Civic Leader team can discuss something about the kind of community they want to role play. What are some of the important values and established programs, etc.?

3. Announce that it is time to begin. Have the civic leaders move to different tables around the room, not sit together. Tell the Mission Group team it is their job to “kick off” and go initiate conversations with various civic leaders according to their plan. Allow at least 30 minutes for the process to move forward.

4. The Mission Group team may want to reconvene from time to time to get reports from conversations with civic leaders and make decisions about the next step in the development of partnerships. In order to move the game along and be more direct in teaching the process, you may want to give 10 minutes and then announce, “It is time for a Mission Group meeting where you plan to go to phase two.” And so on.

**Debriefing:** Be sure to set aside at least 20 minutes after you close down the simulation for the group to discuss what they learned from this exercise. Ask each individual to share specific observations.

iFollow  
Discipleship  
Series:  
Working  
with Jesus

Group  
Activities

**Mission  
Group  
Process**

Part Six:  
Seeking Part-  
nerships



# Handout 1

## Defining the Scope of Community Services

### Adult Education

Classes and tutoring, including public education, GED programs, literacy programs, ESL/language skills, and vocational educational programs. (ESL is English as a Second Language.)

### Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention

Prevention services include programs sponsored by schools or community organizations that provide education about drugs, alcohol, and nicotine.

### Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Treatment

Treatment includes inpatient, outpatient, day treatment, detoxification, follow-up/aftercare, and counseling, as well as self-help groups that use the “12 Step” approach pioneered by Alcoholic Anonymous.

### Case Management

Activities carried out by a case worker in a social service organization to assist families and individuals in receiving needed services. This includes coordinating services from several provider organizations and advocating for unmet needs.

### Child Care

Persons or facilities providing child care include day care centers, preschools, Head Start, family day care, care in the child’s home, and before-school and after-school programs.

### Civil Rights Casework and Advocacy

Public relations, administrative advocacy and legal representation for individuals who have experienced racial, ethnic, religious or gender discrimination in employment, housing, public services or other protected aspects of life.

### Consumer Credit Counseling

Individual and family assistance with reorganizing debt, negotiating arrangements with businesses to whom money is owed and establishing a viable plan for managing personal finances.

### **Crisis Intervention**

Services and facilities for those affected by child abuse and domestic violence. This includes crisis lines, emergency home attention, and emergency shelter.

### **Family Counseling and Support Services**

Assistance to families that includes counseling, support groups, respite care, home-making and parenting skills training, and family budgeting.

### **Family Life Education Classes**

Nonformal courses and seminars for adults on topics such as marriage enrichment, interpersonal communication, coping with conflict, etc.

### **Financial Assistance**

Direct payments to low-income families or indirect payments for basic services in emergency situations.

### **Foster Care**

Programs that include adoption, foster family care, group-home care, institutional care, and residential care.

### **Health Care**

Prevention, screening, and treating child and family health problems; community health clinics.

### **Health Promotion**

Programs designed to promote positive health behaviors including family planning, health education, smoking cessation, nutrition education, weight control, child safety, and accidental injury prevention.

### **Housing Assistance**

Programs that provide families with relocation, rent assistance, weatherization, household improvement, and homelessness services.

### **Information and Networking**

Assistance to staff and volunteers working in community-based nonprofits in finding information and professional contacts appropriate to specific needs.

### **Job Finding**

Employment counseling and placement, including an information system designed to identify available jobs in the community or nearby.

### **Job Training and Preparation**

Classes, support groups and mentoring programs designed to help adults obtain skills that make them more employable, including the process of getting a job.

### **Mental Health Care**

Services and programs that include mental health diagnosis and treatment, inpatient and outpatient psychiatric care, and residential care.

### **Outreach, Identification, and Referral**

Systems that identify children and families in need of services and assure that referrals are made to connect families with the appropriate services.

### **Public Assistance**

Support for families in crisis through public financial aid including TANF, food stamps, medical assistance, unemployment compensation, Supplemental Security Income, WIC, public housing assistance, energy assistance, and other supplemental assistance. (TANF is Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, the “welfare reform” program that replaced AFDC, Assistance to Families with Dependent Children, and is operated by state governments, usually through the county offices, and funded in large part by the Federal government. WIC is the Women, Infants and Children program, a locally-run program mandated by Federal law.)

### **Services for Children and Adults with Special Needs**

Programs that include screening, identification, referral, assessment, therapy and education services, service planning, and service coordination.

### **Transportation**

Programs that provide transportation to needed services, at little or no cost. This including providing reimbursement for travel costs.

### **Youth Activities**

Boys’ and girls’ clubs, Scouting, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, organized recreation programs.

*Source:* Sahlin, Monte (2004). *Understanding Your Community*, Revised Edition. Lincoln, NE: Center for Creative Ministry.