

EDUCATION SECRETARY

A MINISTRY DESCRIPTION FOR LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

Introduction

Adventist schools have been established under the direction of the Lord. "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isaiah 54:13). It has always been God's purpose to educate His children in a climate consistent with His will. The church operates a school system to provide children and youth with a balanced physical, mental, spiritual, social, and vocational education, with God as the source of all moral value and truth. The stated interest of the church is the restoration in people of the image of their Maker, resulting in the optimum development of the whole person for both this life and the life hereafter.

Early in the Old Testament God gave instruction that His followers were to be taught in all significant areas of life: healthful living, civic order, social justice, purposeful work and the deeper meaning of His divine character and law (Deut. 6:1-25). This is the continuing mission of the Seventh-day Adventist school system.

Adventist churches operate schools to bring about the salvation of children and youth through acceptance of and faith in Jesus as their personal Savior and, following that, to help them achieve growth in character so that they will become God-fearing, honest, stable, and productive members of society. The curricula in Adventist schools are designed to instruct students in a biblical view of the origin of life, human duty and destiny.

Paul compares the church to a body in which all of the parts "should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (I Cor. 12:25-27). The educational system of the church includes some of the most important parts of the body. The education secretary has the vital job of helping the entire congregation minister more effectively to the children and youth of the church by encouraging, and in some cases making it financially possible for, each one who desires a Christian education to get it.

"Every man and woman in our ranks, whether a parent or not, ought to be intensely interested in the Lord's vineyard. We cannot afford to allow our children to drift away into the world and to fall under the control of the enemy. Let us come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Let us do all in our power to make our schools a blessing to our youth." (Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Youth*, page 210).

Duties of the Education Secretary

Although the program varies from church to church depending on the size of your congregation, the ministry of the education secretary will include the following:

1. *Keep records of children.* You will need a written record of all the children and young people in church families. A card file of the church membership by household needs to be developed. The church clerk could assist you in this responsibility. After the name of each school-age child a notation should be made as to where the child is attending school. If there are any special problems relating to finance, a parent who is not a church member, etc., a notation should be made on these cards. Of course, no information of a confidential nature should be made public. This file is to help facilitate an accurate report to the conference education office or the school board. You will not automatically serve as a member of the local school board.
2. *Assistance to families with children in public schools.* Communicate to the pastor the obstacles that may have kept a student from attending church school. Work with the family and the school personnel to see if the problem can be resolved.

3. *Promote Christian education.* Cooperate with the pastor and other educational personnel in your church in helping to educate church members concerning the benefits of Christian education and the necessity of providing an Adventist education for all the youth who desire it. Vigorously promote giving toward financial aid for needy and worthy students. Coordinate periodic reports to the church featuring the church school, junior academy, senior academy and college. Help plan the yearly Education Day program.
4. *Help the parents of infants.* Christian education begins at infancy in the home. If plans for education in a Christian school begin at the time a new baby arrives in the home, and parents have planned ahead, the financial burden of a church school does not bring on a sudden drain in the family budget.
5. *Special care for the children of new converts.* Special care needs to be shown in communicating the opportunities available in the Adventist schools to new converts and their children. Appropriate brochures and handbooks from the various schools they could attend should be given to them. Arrangements could be made for the new family to visit the schools along with another church member who is familiar with the educational institution and program.

Resource Materials

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

Counsels on Education, Ellen G. White. This book is a compilation of the major articles pertaining to Christian Education that first appeared in the nine volumes of *Testimonies for the Church*.

How to Help Your Child Really Love Jesus, by Donna Habenicht. A child development specialist explains how children develop spiritually and offers practical suggestions on how you can help children establish a lasting friendship with God.

Myths in Adventism, An Interpretive Study of Ellen White, Education, and Related Issues by George Knight. It explores the basic issues of true education both in the home and institutions. It will broaden your understanding of the high goals of Adventist education.

Why Can't I Do School? by Helen Godfrey Pyke. The author, an English professor with ADD and dyslexia, shares stories of students who learned differently, but were successful.

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

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