

PLANNING COMMITTEE

A MINISTRY DESCRIPTION FOR LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

Introduction

God asks the church to be a community of people sharing a common purpose and fellowship, continually growing in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God. Paul describes the church as "his body, the fullness of him who filleth every thing in every way" (Eph. 1:22).

God calls us into His body for the purpose of establishing a saving relationship with Him and community with one another. The symbol of water baptism marks our entrance into the body of Christ and also marks the baptism of the Holy Spirit experienced by a new disciple. "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of the water and the Spirit, He cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

You experience the presence of Jesus Christ in the world within your church; the world experiences the living presence of Jesus Christ as it witnesses your church. When a local church serves the world it is an expression of the love of Christ to the world. It is the body of Christ serving the world's needs and being used by the Spirit as an agency of salvation.

God calls every member of the church into ministry. The church is a kingdom of priests set free to minister effectively for Christ. Our priesthood is to each other within the church and to the world. The planning committee members, like other church officers, are ministering servants of God. Every Christian believer is called to ministry, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and in baptism ordained for ministry (Eph. 4:11-12).

Duties of the Planning Committee

Although the specific group assigned to do planning varies from church to church, the basic responsibilities of any planning committee are the same:

1. *Fact-finding.* The committee will gather facts about the existing programs and current needs in the church and the community. This includes church growth statistics, surveys of church members and neighborhood residents, demographic data and input from program leaders.
2. *Prayer.* The committee will seek to find God's will for His church, and spend significant time in seasons of prayer. The members of a planning committee must believe that the Holy Spirit will guide them in understanding the information and in choosing the right objectives and methods. A concert of prayer throughout the congregation, interceding on behalf of the planning committee and pleading for church renewal, is a vital part of the planning process.
3. *Study.* The committee will undertake a careful study of the mission of the Adventist church as presented in scripture, the vision of Ellen White and the official Statement of Mission of the North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. It will spend time reviewing the unique mission of your local church.
4. *Written plans.* The committee will produce carefully written plans, including a general goal or statement of mission, several specific objectives and detailed methods for achieving those objectives. The document will include a master calendar for the year with specific activities noted, assignments for the church officers indicating who will lead each activity, and a budget for the expenses involved in these activities. It is rare that a local church can handle more than two or three objectives at a time.
5. *Report.* The document developed by the planning committee is not official until it has been voted by the church board or a general church business meeting. The committee will present its report to the church board. Copies should be circulated to all church members. The work of the planning committee and the church budget committee should be combined and presented to a church business meeting at the same time. It is

recommended that the planning document written by the planning committee be combined with the budget recommended by the church board, and that church members be given the opportunity of voting on a total package. This motivates support for the local church both through involvement and giving.

Resource Materials

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

A Shared Vision for the Local Church is a 56-page booklet that presents the conceptual framework for understanding the life and mission of the local Seventh-day Adventist church. Self study, seminar, or workshop.

Radical Disciples for Revolutionary Churches, by Russell Burrill. The author explores what it takes to produce church members who want to be participants, not spectators, and proposes a major change in how to "do evangelism."

Rekindling a Lost Passion: Recreating a Church Planting Movement, by Russell Burrill. The author supplies the nuts and bolts of planting new churches and issues an urgent call to recapture that same passion for the lost that Christ has.

Revolution in the Church, by Russell Burrill. Believing that both pastors and laity have strayed far from their biblically assigned roles, the author proposes a radical change in how Adventists "do church."

Revolutionized Church of the 21st Century, by Russell Burrill. Experience the explosive power of a church built on relationships.

The Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. The seven mission objectives for our church.

Vision for Mission is a structured process which enables a local church to move from vision to action. To get the name of a certified facilitator to assist your local church, contact your conference office or write to the Adult Ministries Department, North American Division, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

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.