



Understanding Your Community

Part Six: Community Systems

iFOLLOW

Working with Jesus

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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Understanding Your Community Part Six: Community Systems

This is the sixth in a series of six units designed to provide basic training in community assessment.

Learning Objectives

1. Introduce a systems approach to understanding the community
2. Review the major systems within the local community and understand how they interact with each other
3. Understand how the church might interact with the local community

Content Outline

1. A theological foundation for a systems approach to the community
2. Local government
3. Business and industry
4. Health care and disease prevention
5. School system and education
6. Public utilities
7. Nonprofit and voluntary sector
8. Religion
9. The media

Background Material for the Presenter

Our 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.”

Hallet created the chart in Handout 1 to illustrate the social forces at work in modern, metropolitan communities. He uses it in workshops for pastors and lay leaders, asking them to reflect on the chart and answer four questions: (1) Where are your church members located during the work week? (2) What are the occupational stressors, tensions and ethical issues that your members must deal with? (3) What spiritual resources do people need to nurture them when they gather as a congregation? (4) What witness and ministry resources do your people need to enable them to effectively be on mission with Christ at their jobs and in the community?

These are fundamental questions for pastoral ministry. They outline the key elements that must be present for a pastor and congregation to really serve those who gather for worship and Sabbath school each week, and to empower them for ministry in the world. And, these questions must be informed by an understanding of local systems in order to make the work of the pastor and congregation relevant to a particular community.

Government

Government is often most visible community system because it usually defines the boundaries and name of a community. If you use Zip Code areas to define the neighborhood(s) you serve, those are created by the Postal Service, a Federal government agency, in cooperation with local governments. If you use a town or county to define your ministry area, those boundaries are created by the state legislature. Government is not necessarily the most vital system in the community, but it is usually the most widely known structure.

There are at least three layers of government below the state level—county, municipal, and special-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 my concise description here.

County government is administrative in nature because the counties are extensions of the state government. Counties usually do not have legislative entities—an elected



body that makes laws—and are involved only in the executive branch of government. (In Louisiana a county is called a “parish,” and in Alaska it is called a “borough.”)

A county commission is the format used in many smaller counties and some large metropolitan area. It consists of three to five elected officials who share the administrative leadership of the county. Each commissioner may be the equivalent of a “department head” in the county government or supervise several department heads. The commissioners sit together as a group to vote the yearly budget and make major decisions about purchases, contracts and employees.

A county council is the format used in many of the more populated areas. There is usually a chief executive officer, often called County Administrator or County Executive, along with the council. This is a more elaborated form of county government that looks more like the separation of legislative and executive branches in the national and state government, although technically the county council votes only policies and not laws.

County governments typically have officers and departments for roads—and airports and mass transit in more urbanized areas—as well as public works, property tax administration, planning, public welfare (or human resources), health and mental health. Some counties operate parks and recreation programs and a few operate public utilities. The county sheriff is in charge of the county jail and other corrections facilities operated on behalf of the county and municipal courts, serving warrants and enforcing court orders. Sheriff’s deputies may also be involved in providing police services in unincorporated areas where there is no municipal police force or there may be a separate county police department. The county clerk’s office is where marriage licenses, birth certificates and deaths are officially recorded, and the county coroner or medical examiner plays a specialized role in conducting an autopsy when there is any question about the cause of death. A few counties even operate a fire department.

There is usually little opportunity for church ministries to cooperate meaningfully with county government. This level of government is typically not very involved in community relations or the kind of community concerns that a congregation or Christian ministry would focus on.

Municipal government—city, town or village—does usually exercise both legislative and executive powers. The powers of municipal governments are defined by state law, and sometimes vary based on different “classes” or sizes of cities and towns. (A “township” can be confusing terminology. In some states the unincorporated areas with a county are organized into “townships” which are administrative units of the county. In other states “township” refers to a level of municipal government. You will simply have



to ask to find out what the term means in your state.) There are four basic types of municipal government structures used in the United States:

1. The council-manager type government is the most widely used. An elected city or town council votes city ordinances (rules or local laws), approves an annual budget, and provides general oversight for the municipal government. It hires a full-time, professional city manager who hires and fires municipal employees, implements the decisions of the council and serves as the chief executive officer of the city or town. In small towns and suburban areas, the city council usually consists of five to nine members elected “at-large” with all of the voters in town voting for all the council seats at the same time. In larger towns and more urbanized areas, the council members are often elected from “wards” or districts within the city. Most council-manager towns have an official who carries the title “mayor,” but this is strictly a ceremonial role. The powers of the “mayor” are limited to chairing the meetings of the city council. In some cases the candidate for city council who gets the highest number of votes in the most recent election is automatically the “mayor,” and in other cases, the council elects one of its members as chair or “mayor.” City council members are part-time volunteers, not full-time paid officials, although they typically get a small per diem for each day the council meets, usually once a week.

2. A “strong mayor” type government is used in almost all large cities. The mayor is an elected official who serves as the full-time, paid chief executive officer of the city government. The mayor in a “strong mayor” structure has an equivalent role to the U.S. president or state governor. The mayor appoints the police chief, fire chief and other department heads. The mayor develops the budget proposal each year and provides overall guidance for the city. There is also an elected city council, which is the legislative wing of the municipal government. It must approve ordinances, the yearly budget, and other key decisions (sometimes including confirmation of the mayor’s appointees to major positions). City council members may be part-time volunteers, not full-time paid officials, or—in larger cities—they may be full-time paid officials like members of the U.S. Congress.

3. A “weak mayor” type government is used in smaller cities and towns. It combines some aspects of the first two types of municipal government. The mayor is an elected official and titular head of the executive branch of government—not a member of the city council—but he or she is a part-time volunteer, not paid to function full time, and there is a full-time, professional city manager. In a “weak mayor” type government, the mayor is the chief executive officer and the city manager is the chief administrative officer, but because the city manager is a full-time, paid professional and the mayor is a part-time volunteer, the city manager actually exercises more power than the mayor in most cases. Again, city council members are part-time volunteers, not full-time paid officials, although they typically get a small per diem for each day the council meets, usually once a week.

4. The commission type government was popular during the “Progressive era” of American politics in the first decades of the 20th century, but is used in only a few places today. The city commission consists of four elected officials who exercise both legislative powers, when meeting as a group, and executive powers as the heads of the departments of town government. Each commissioner is a full-time, paid official in all except the smallest towns, where it may be a part-time position.

Municipal governments typically provide police and fire services, maintain streets, operate water and sewer systems (and sometimes other utilities), 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. Larger cities will also have a planning department and other functions that parallel those of county governments.

Town and city government provides many opportunities for positive contact and cooperation by local churches and ministries. The mayor’s ceremonial role—especially in suburbs and small towns—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 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.

In addition to the county and municipal governments, there are almost always **specific-purpose governmental organizations** that are not departments of either the county or the city. The most common example of this category is the Public School District. Schools, in most states, are operated separately from the municipal or county governments by elected school boards who operate school districts under the authority of state law and the guidance of a state education department. The elected members of school boards are part-time volunteers who may be paid a modest per diem for each weekly meeting they attend to cover travel expense, etc. The district superintendent is a paid, full-time professional administrator who serves as the chief executive officer of the schools. The



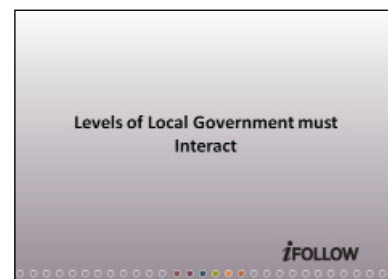
superintendent is hired and fired by the school board, which also has authority to approve the yearly budget and adopt policies within the parameters of state law.

Economic development is another area which is typically operated as a separate, specific-purpose organization. The board of the economic development agency may be made up of representatives from the county and the cities and towns within the region. The agency gets funding from the state and Federal governments, and may have ear-marked tax percentages or special purpose taxes on items related to commercial taxpayers. It may also have authority to issue government bonds to borrow money for projects. The purpose of an economic development agency is to attract businesses to the area and assist in the construction of facilities that will create new jobs and tax income. The board hires and fires the agency administrator, who is a paid, full-time professional.

A public housing authority, airport commission, port authority or mass transit agency may be structured in the same way as an economic development agency. Sometimes there is a regional parks and recreation authority which operates certain facilities and programs, although there may also be smaller municipal parks operated by the towns and cities. Some public hospitals, nursing homes and other institutions are sponsored by the same kind of governmental structure. Once in a while, even fire and police services are delivered through this kind of entity.

Depending on the nature of specific-purpose government in your community, you may or may not find opportunities for contact and cooperation. If, for example, health and hospital services are provided through a specific-purpose governmental organization, then you might come into contact with some of the staff at this entity as you develop health outreach programs. If the specific-purpose government in your community operates only the airport, then it is less likely that you will have contact with them unless you decide to install a *Signs of the Times* magazine program at the airport, for example.

The various **levels of local government must interact** in order to achieve their individual purposes. The constituencies they serve overlap and they are often involved in what could be conflicting activities. In parts of New England and Virginia some of the oldest towns and cities are not part of a county, but include the powers and functions of county government within their municipal functions. Usually, the county government has certain administrative functions relative to the municipal governments, school districts or other entities in its territory. Some of the specific-purpose government entities are structured under the joint authority of county and city governments that join together to sponsor them.



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. It may, on occasion, have contracts with the Federal government or one or more of the member governments to conduct certain planning or research functions. For example, it may be agreed among the governments who belong to the association that it is best for the association to conduct a survey of hospitals which is mandated by state law to determine if there are too many hospital beds in the area. The association becomes a neutral party handling a “hot potato,” an entity which is not subject to the voters. Some associations or councils of governments are quite informal gatherings; others employ a full-time, paid professional as executive director and even a number of staff associates.

Business and Industry

Communities form around economic needs. For example, your community may have started because of a river or seaport. It may have originally—200 years ago or more—been simply a trading point where traders met trappers once a year to purchase animal pelts or to obtain some other natural resource. As time went on, a trading post was opened for long months and eventually even year-round. As the volume of trade increased, banks became necessary to handle the money involved, and then the traders wanted insurance for large warehouses or ships lost in transit, so insurance companies were formed. So, the downtown business district of a settlement of any size even today includes one or more banks, an insurance office and commercial trading and transportation facilities.



When the industrial revolution arrived, most communities became either industrial centers or agriculture centers. The industrial centers became larger cities as more and more labor was required and agriculture became the province of small towns as it became less and less labor intensive over the years. With the invention of the street car, commuting became possible and “bedroom communities” or suburbs were developed from which workers traveled each day to either down business districts or industrial areas. After World War II, the automobile became the standard mode of travel for most commuters and the suburbs began to sprawl out further and further from the central city in each metropolitan area.

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 communities to 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. There are three types of businesses and institutions in each community.

There are a few **major employers** in your community. (You can obtain a list from the Chamber of Commerce.) In most communities fewer than ten organizations employ the largest numbers of workers. If you look at a list in rank order showing the number of local employees at each organization, you will see a clear break in the range of numbers after the top three, five, seven or so. These major employers have a particularly important role in the economy of your community. If one or two of these organizations were to go out of business or move away, it would deal a terrible blow to the entire community. Large numbers of families would be forced to relocate, retire early or live in poverty. I have visited congregations where the membership was reduced by half or more in one year due to such an event.



In most communities, some of these major employers are **not** commercial businesses, but government or nonprofit institutions. For example, in a small town that serves as the county seat for a rural county, government may be one of the major employers, as well as the school district, or the regional hospital. Even in larger cities, a surprising percentage of the employment may be in non-commercial sectors and a few institutions may be among the top employers.

A “mill town” is a community in which one manufacturing or mining operation is by far and away the largest employer. In past generations, the manager of this factory or mine exercised enormous power over the life of the community because of his direct influence on the local economy. To this day, you may hear a siren or bell at certain hours or observe extraordinary timing of certain activities which are related to decisions made generations ago about the operating hours of “the mill.” This may be true even if “the mill” is now out of business.

In any community the top management of the major employers are very influential individuals. If one of these men or women is a member of your congregation, you have a potential avenue to meet the elite in the community and to position your ministry for visibility. If someone in your congregation works in a staff position for top management of a major employer, you may be able to get the door opened to introduce yourself to one of the community elite. These are very busy, often quite private, individuals and a continued relationship will be on their terms, not your wishes. But, there is always the opportunity that you will find some shared interest in an introductory conversation, and, having met the person once, you do have some

potential name recognition to go back later with a specific request related to some community event or program that you may be organizing.

In some communities, Adventist schools or hospitals can provide an avenue of contact with the top management of major employers. In smaller towns, one of these families may be looking for a private school for their children and decide to take a look at the Adventist church school. In communities with an Adventist hospital, they may make contact to negotiate health plans for their employees or because they want to provide support for the hospital as an important community institution.

The largest employing organizations in your community will most likely have a well-developed internal bureaucracy. If you are simply asking for them to distribute information to their employees about a community health event or family life seminar, this type of request needs to be discussed with an appropriate staff person or mid-level manager. Even if you would like for a top executive to make an appearance or be willing to have his or her picture taken as part of the project, the place to initiate such a request is with the appropriate staff assistant. An attempt to go directly “to the top” will be seen as arrogant or uncultured. Most large businesses and institutions today have an officer for community relations who would be interested in community events or projects. There is usually an administrative assistant in the top executive office which handles scheduling requests, etc. It is best to phone and get an appointment for a get-acquainted visit with one of these staff people before attempting to make contact with top management.

The second tier of the economic system in your community is made up of **large, national corporations** with local branches. These corporations will employ somewhat fewer workers in their local plants, warehouses or offices than do the major employers in the community, but they do have significant numbers of local employees. Unless you are in one of the largest metropolitan areas in North America, the local branch of a large, national corporation will be one of its factories or a regional warehouse or office. Most corporate headquarters are located in the 25 largest metropolitan areas.



One or two of the top executives in some of these local branches may be socially connected with the community elite. Most of the managers in the local units of large, national corporations are more likely to be part of the upper middle class professional and managerial segment of the community, not among the elite. These are people that you are more likely to find among your church members or run into at community organizations or through informal, social contacts.

These branch organizations of large, national corporations have less ability to do things in the community than do the major employers. The most important decision-makers in these corporations live some distance from your community. They are

likely more interested in national issues or the community where the corporate headquarters is located than they are in your community. On the other hand, most national corporations today have recognized the importance of at least appearing to be socially responsible businesses, and they do give their branch managers some encouragement and policies relative to community involvement, etc. You will find the management from these employers getting involved in civic clubs and other local community service projects.

This kind of business would likely be willing to consider a proposal from your congregation or ministry for assistance in a community health project, parent education class, or local humanitarian program. Most have corporate giving programs and many are now starting volunteerism programs. The most common type of volunteerism policies are (1) group projects that can be completed by 15 to 50 people in one day—preferably something visible, like constructing a playground for children or cleaning up a central square—which are meticulously planned and well-organized and (2) allowing workers—especially middle management—to volunteer a few hours each week or month in a worthwhile community project. The most common type of corporate giving program is one in which donations by employees are matched by the corporation.

Funding proposals are considered by some corporations, but they must be in writing with a careful plan and budget, documentation relative to other funders and the nonprofit status of the organization to which they are giving a potential grant. No corporation will give funds to the religious activities of the church or church buildings. Because Adventist schools are defined by the denomination as part of the church, it is almost impossible to get corporate grants for church schools. The one type of grant that Adventist organizations have had some success in getting from a wide range of corporate giving programs is a proposal submitted in the name of Adventist Community Services, **not** the name of the Church, institution or conference. (ACS has been legally incorporated at the national level as a “public charity.” It has a tax-exempt status under the IRS Code section 501(c)3 which is separate from the denomination’s “umbrella” tax exemption. Therefore corporations and foundations which have a policy against giving funds to a religious organization will recognize ACS has a “non-sectarian” nonprofit, humanitarian organization and give grants to ACS. Arrangements can be made for your local program to establish a similar status. For assistance, contact the Center for Creative Ministry at 800-272-4664.)

A number of Adventist congregations have been successful in collaborating with local branches of major corporations in conducting health screening and education events for the employees and/or retirees of the business. I have also talked with a few Adventist pastors who have been able to work out an opportunity to teach a stress management seminar or parenting workshop or similar adult education class for the employees of a business. Of course, it takes time to win the trust of key managers at

a personal level before such a plan has any opportunity of being seriously considered.

The bottom tier of business in your community consists of the many **small businesses** and self-employed professionals in town. These businesses are largely dependent for their economic survival on the larger employers. If those larger organizations did not employ a number of individuals whose families need to purchase groceries, gasoline, and various services, then most of the small businesses would not be able to function. It is a general rule of community economics that every job in a core industry or major employing organization creates two or three additional jobs in the community because of the needs of those core employees.



You are much more likely to have contact with this tier of the economic system in your community than you are with the top two tiers. If you live in the community, your family needs to purchase clothing, food, medicines, etc. Even if you drive in from another community to serve the local church, you will from time to time use a local gasoline station or restaurant. Most of these businesses are run by a proprietor who owns the enterprise and operates it. He or she may have borrowed money from the bank to open the business or purchase facilities, or may have financial backing from family and friends, but usually there are no formal stockholders. A few of these businesses are partnerships where two or three individuals co-own the enterprise. In some cases only one of the partners is active in the business; the other(s) may have retired or gone on to another job.

In addition to independent, local businesses there are a growing number of franchise operations. McDonalds is a good example of the franchise arrangement. A local business person owns the McDonalds fast-foot outlet, but he or she has entered into a contract with the McDonalds Corporation which specifies the menu, the pricing, the suppliers, the equipment, the design of the store, the color of paint, and many other things. The national corporation also provides training for the local employees, a health benefits plan, and advertising services. It also purchases national advertising on television networks, etc., which helps to promote the local business. McDonalds is one of the most complete franchise packages; many other national franchise operations allow a lot more local choice on various details.

Franchises have become a very popular way for a new generation of small, local businesses to get started. Business people like the franchise concept because it gives them the benefit of the expertise and resources of a large, national corporation. What they have to invest to start their local business is clearly defined for them, and there is a support network that makes their local success more likely than if they launch out on their own. Large numbers of small businesses fail, and the franchise concept

has become a major hedge against bankruptcy on the part of people starting small businesses.

There is likely a core of small businesses in your community which have been around for two or more generations. The current proprietors either inherited the business from their parents or bought the business. The stores along “Main Street” are often in this category. A number of the owners of these businesses are widely recognized as key members of the community. You will find them active in civic clubs, local churches and other organizations. If you can connect at a personal level with one or more of these business people, then you have a potential entry point to community leaders. I have been told by a number of Adventist pastors about getting to know a small business proprietor in the community, perhaps spending some time in recreation or ministering to the person at a time of family need, and then being invited to attend a civic club with their business friend. Of course, it takes time for this kind of relationship to develop. If you only spend a couple of years in the community and then take a call to another pastorate, this type of relationship will not be open to you.

In most Adventist congregations there are at least one or two families who own a small, local business. For obvious reasons, these are more often services or stores that do not typically operate on the weekends. It is almost impossible to break even in a restaurant, gas station or small market and be closed on Sabbath as well as refuse to sell tobacco and alcohol products. A plumber, an office supply store, or an auto repair shop can be successfully operated without opening on Sabbath, at least in many communities.

Self-employed professionals are more likely to be found in Adventist congregations. A physician, social worker, accountant or lawyer can more easily limit their working hours and control the conditions of their work than a merchant or restaurateur. Adventists also have a historic relationship with the helping professions that they do not have with more commercial businesses.

Adventist Churches have traditionally had a fund raising relationship with small businesses still called generically, “Ingathering,” even though the Ingathering program has been replaced by a new annual appeal with a different name. Earlier generations of Adventist pastors and lay leaders learned that it is possible to stop by a small business—usually in the mid-morning on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, when it is not so busy—and make a brief presentation to the manager or proprietor which will be rewarded in about one out of five visits with a check for \$25 to \$100. If this business has a history of previous donations, the check may be for as much as \$500 on occasion. Over the years the field representatives for the Christian Record Services blind ministry have also developed the same technique, using it successfully year-round. *Listen* magazine representatives have also learned to use the same technique, with the added advantage of collaboration with the local school district. It

is a common approach to fund raising used by many nonprofit organizations, and if you have a visible, well-developed Community Service Center, you will find that this is an effective way not only to raise funds, but also to get to know the small business operators in your community and even to find occasional opportunities to pray with individuals and start Bible studies.

Many pastors, especially in the younger generations, may recoil from fund raising as if there were something inherently unethical or grueling about it. I can testify that if it is conducted under the established standards of such organizations as the Better Business Bureau or the National Society of Fund Raising Executives (NSFRE) and uses state-of-the-art technique it can be fun and done with respect. In fact, a clergy person willing to “get their hands dirty” in the world of money gains respect from the business community! Even the business people who turn you down will notice you, remember the cause you represent and give you greater respect than they give the “average” clergy in town.

The Chamber of Commerce is the organization that represents the business system in your community. It probably has a manager who works either full-time or part-time as a paid employee and is active in community affairs. This a good starting point in establishing contact and gathering information in the community.

The Chamber is a membership organization, just like a civic club. Any business person can join, although usually the membership is actually in the name of the business or organization. Nonprofit organizations can join the Chamber. I have seen local Adventist churches join the Chamber of Commerce. In exchange for perhaps \$150 or \$200 a year in dues, you get a wealth of information, opportunities to attend various meetings where you can make contacts, as well as educational and informational events. The fact that your church is printed in the membership directory of the Chamber gives you some visibility in the business community. One consideration: if you think about joining, ask about the rules for a nonprofit organization that joins the Chamber and may do fund raising in the community. In a few places, the Chamber has a rule which would prohibit you from “Ingathering” type contacts with the other members of the Chamber if your congregation or ministry were to join.

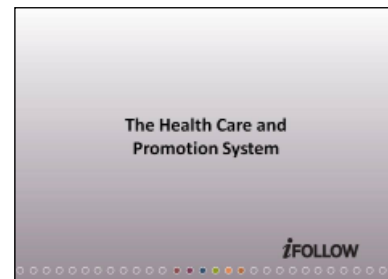
Where the Chamber of Commerce leadership has developed relationships over the years and is politically astute, it may be quite visible in speaking up on behalf of the business community on a variety of local issues. More likely, such public statements are few and far between and issued only after the 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.

The Health Care and Promotion 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. Most communities have one primary hospital, although in major metropolitan areas there are a number of hospitals that compete with each other. Some hospitals are specialized and serve only a narrowly-defined range of patients, but most communities have a “general hospital” that provides an emergency room, a wide range of surgical and medical care, an obstetrics unit for births, a psychiatric program, and perhaps other services.



Because of efforts on the part of government, large employers and insurance companies to reduce the cost of health care, hospitals are under a great deal of pressure to reduce the stay of inpatients, start outpatient programs, provide preventive medicine programs, and adopt more efficient management processes. These pressures result in conflict, cutbacks, uncertainty among employees and attacks in the news media, as well as an unprecedented willingness on the part of hospitals to look for new alliances and new opportunities.

As a result, there is a good chance for your congregation or community-based ministry to develop a partnership with a local hospital. In some instances, a local hospital—even some not affiliated with the Adventist denomination—is willing to help fund a Parish Nurse program or provide a part-time Parish Nurse from its staff. Often cooperation begins at a less costly and involved level. Perhaps your church can provide a location in the community where health promotion classes can be 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 designate your facility as 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.

Most hospitals today are interested in cultivating a good relationship with the community and want to partner with churches and other community groups in health promotion activities. Hospital administrators and health care professionals are more likely to have heard of the Adventist Church than are members of the general public. This is a fruitful area for you to seek cooperation.

Nursing homes, intermediate care facilities and home health agencies are operated by both nonprofit and private, for-profit organizations. The focus of all of these organizations is to help the elderly and others who no longer need hospitalization, but are not fully able to take care of themselves. Often this is a short-term need. Sometimes it is long-term. Nursing homes include a number of aged patients who are no longer able to live independently or with family, and must be cared for during the rest of their lives.



There is a long tradition of “the Sunshine Band” in churches of many denominations, volunteers who visit nursing homes in the community as a group to perform for the residents, visit with them from room to room and maybe provide simple activities. Nursing homes often would like to have religious services provided on site for their residents. A Bible study group might be welcomed or other group activities on a weekly or monthly basis. There are many opportunities for ministry in cooperation with one or more local nursing homes.

Hospice services are for those individuals—regardless of age—for whom nothing more can be done in terms of medical treatment, who face death in a very short time. These are often younger people with cancer or AIDS. Aged residents of nursing homes, even if their condition is deteriorating, are more rarely transferred to hospice care.



Today hospice services are often provided in the home of the dying person. The hospice staff will include nurses, social workers, psychologists and usually a chaplain. There is usually a physician as medical director. The team supervises the care of the dying person and helps the family to prepare for the death, but leaves much of the work in the hands of relatives and volunteers.

If someone in your congregation were to face the need for hospice assistance, especially if they need these services in their home, the hospice staff will ask—

through the family—that the church get involved. Orientation will be provided to interested church members and the pastor will be encouraged to talk with the dying person and family members about death, grief, etc.

Larry Yeagley is an Adventist pastor and hospital chaplain who has developed effective models for grief ministry over the years. His books and video presentations are tools that you and your congregation can use in cooperation with a local hospice.

It is important that a relationship with the hospice in your community be established before an urgent need occurs. An introductory visit with the staff by the pastor or a key lay leader would be welcomed by most hospice organizations, and many would be happy to make a presentation to the church board or the entire congregation.

Private practitioners or health-care providers include physicians, and in today's world a growing list of other professionals; nurse practitioners, consulting dietitians, social workers, psychologists, and other therapists, etc. More doctors are also working as employees of health maintenance organizations, group practices and hospitals. Many professionals belong to group practices. The classic office practice has been left behind in a new, complex world with many different kinds of structures and organizational relationships.



Nonetheless, these health professionals all got into health care at least in part because they value helping people overcome suffering and live healthy lives. That is a value that is also important to the Adventist Church, so health professionals should be a group in your community with which your congregation can have a special ministry.

Health professionals are often willing to assist with community health screening and health education programs, even if they have no affiliation with the Church. For example, I have seen on many occasions in many different communities, the local Adventist church or Adventist Community Services center organize a “Heartbeat” community coronary risk evaluation and need the services of a lab technician to draw blood samples and process them for shipment to the laboratory. When no one among the church members was qualified or available to handle this task, the coordinator would visit local hospital labs and ask for a qualified lab tech who was willing to help, perhaps for a stipend. This always resulted in obtaining the needed personnel and opened the door to an interesting relationship. There are many dedicated professionals that cannot be approached successfully in any other way. These people will not respond to evangelistic advertising or attend public meetings, but they will respond to a request to help with a community health promotion program.

Physicians, family counselors and other therapists in private practice are generally listed in the Yellow Pages. Lists of nurses, lab technicians and other professionals can

often be obtained from local professional organizations. These lists can be an opening for you to begin to communicate with the health professionals in your community, inform them of your health promotion activities and the Adventist commitment to healthy living. Invite them to a yearly forum on health issues. Especially, if you have at least one or two health professionals among your active members, this can be an excellent arena for ministry.

Community clinics are an important type of health care organization. Some clinics are operated by hospitals; they are actually departments of your local hospital. Other “clinics” are actually group practices. Another category is the free-standing community clinic which may be operated by the county or municipal government in a few places, but is more often a nonprofit agency devoted to the delivery of health care to the poor and/or working class families. Sometimes they are called a “Free Clinic,” although most of them are not longer entirely free of charge, using a sliding-scale fee based on the household income of the patient, billing third-party payers if possible, and insisting on a minimum payment in all cases except the most desperate with proven inability to pay.



The clinics are natural allies with a congregation concerned about health. They will often welcome a group volunteers coming in to provide health education classes. They will cooperate in health screening events or community health fairs. Most need volunteers—nurses, physicians and other health professionals, as well as receptionists, clerks, and other helpers—and would be delighted to have your church offer to help provide qualified individuals.

In several communities across America, an Adventist Community Services unit is operating a community health clinic. A model clinic is the one operated by Good Neighbor House, the ACS agency in Dayton, Ohio. It serves families who are without medical coverage; those who are not poor enough to be covered by Medicare and not employed in a job that provides health insurance or medical benefits. There are actually three clinics—medical, dental and optical—each operating certain evenings of the week, staffed entirely by volunteer health professionals. A fee of \$5 is charged to help pay for medications and supplies. Your church might want to consider a similar ministry, if there is no clinic of this kind operating in your community. The book *Ministries of Compassion* includes a chapter with detailed information on how to start and operate a community health clinic based on the experience of the clinic at Portland (Oregon) Adventist Community Services (PACS).

Community mental health centers (CMHC) are a specific kind of community clinic specializing in addictions and other mental health needs. These are generally subsidized by Federal and state governments and operated either as an extension

of a local hospital or a free-standing institution. The medical director is usually a psychiatrist, and there are often psychologists, psychiatric nurses, social workers and other health professionals as well as paraprofessional community workers on the staff.

These centers have become more important over the last several decades 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 now living in your community and other communities. These people get regular treatment and medications from community mental health centers. Almost all communities are assigned to some CMHC, although in some cases it is not located in the community.

The CMHC in your community can be a helpful resource in providing pastoral care for families with needs related to depression, substance abuse and more severe mental health conditions. If you have not inquired about programs of cooperation with clergy and congregations, you should do so. Many CMHC’s provide annual seminars on dealing with grief, family conflict, determining when mental health conditions are severe enough to need the intervention of a mental health professional, etc.

Many CMHC’s have health educators on staff who may be available to provide speaking appointments at your church, church school or Community Service Center on specific topics that you invite them for. You will need to carefully plan such cooperation. Although the CMHC can be a rich resource, it is also true that a number of mental health professionals have negative prejudices about religion in general and conservative Protestant religions specifically. Some actually believe that “religion is a myth created by people with weak mental health.” Once you have established a level of trust with someone at the CMHC staff, do not be afraid to ask openly about the attitude of the professionals toward people of faith. Explain humbly and without rancor that you need someone who will be respectful of the conservative faith of your members who can speak to your group. It is likely that you will find someone on the CMHC staff who is at least willing to honestly explore this issue with you.

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. In the Federal government, there is the U.S. Public Health Service—a uniformed corps of physicians, nurses and other health professionals—within the Department of Health and Human Services. The U.S. Public Health



Service is headed by the Surgeon-General of the United States, the top doctor in the country. A number of Adventist physicians and other health professionals have served on the staff of the Surgeon-General over the past several decades and helped to prepare major, national reports on smoking and health, diet and health, etc. U.S. Public Health Service officers are located in many communities across the country, and operate clinics, hospitals and other health care projects.

State and county governments also have public health departments and mental health departments. State health departments 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. This is an area where cooperative opportunities may be open to your community health ministry.

County health departments are typically involved in conducting inspection visits, sampling the drinking water, following-up outbreaks of infectious diseases, etc. Often the county health department has a staff of public health nurses who get involved in unmet health care needs among the poor, hard to reach segments, etc. Typically the county health department also has a health education or health promotion officer, and this individual may provide small grants to fund materials, educational events, screening activities, etc., by community organizations. In larger cities there is also a city health department which may have many of the same functions.

One way to work cooperatively with the county or city health department in your community is through a community health fair. Many Adventist groups have taken the initiative or helped to conduct such events. Hundreds, even thousands, of people attend these events. Information is available from the Health Ministries Department of the denomination on how to plan and organize such projects.

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



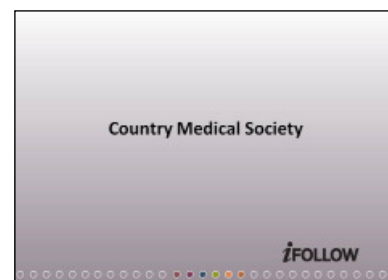
and visibility in the community in many cases. The Lung Association, for example, has extensive resources for smoking cessation programs, but it may be that the local chapter in your community has had difficulty in sustaining volunteers to implement these programs. If approached in a tactful and open-hearted way, the leadership might be sold on the idea that your church or Adventist Community Services unit can provide the Breathe Free plan as a supplement to their organization, to fill the gap. If your local Lung Association has an active smoking cessation program, you might want to visit with the program director and identify areas of unmet need where your Breathe Free program could focus so as to not be in direct competition.

Many of the major metropolitan areas have health education centers where a wide range of fitness and health promotion programs are provided. These nonprofit organizations are often happy for cooperation with the Adventist Church. In several places an Adventist serves on the board of directors.

Health planning agencies have been established in almost every state and in many regional areas. These small organizations help to assess how many hospital beds and various kind of health care services are needed. Licenses for clinics, hospitals and other health care programs may depend on certification of need by a health planning agency. This agency can also be an excellent source of information for you; there is likely a document on file that shows the level of need for various kinds of health education and health promotion activities in the community.



The **county medical society** and related health professional groups play a powerful role in representing doctors and other health practitioners. It does not usually have any legal or binding authority, but is 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 screening projects or health education classes, it will open many doors for referrals, distribution of brochures, etc. At is also a good source of information about health needs in the community.



School System and Education Institutions

Public schools are operated by school districts who hire the principals and teachers, provide textbooks and supplies, etc. Each district is presided over by a school board of elected officials and a superintendent of education, the chief executive officer

of the district. (See the section above on government.) The principals of the local schools in your community likely have regular meetings with a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or advisory committee and other community organizations. They know that they need community support in order to maintain funding at sufficient levels, etc.

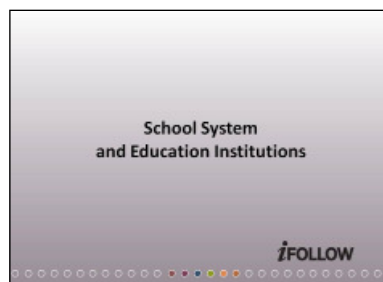
Parochial schools or church schools are operated by religious groups. The Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopal and Quaker (“Friends”) faiths all operate significant numbers of elementary and secondary schools in North America, as does the Adventist Church. Schools with the generic label “Christian” may in some cases be sponsored by a local Baptist church or churches, and in other cases are operated by a private, nonprofit organization or even an individual. There is growing interest in parochial schools as more and more Americans feel that the quality of their local public schools is suffering and/or the need for their children to have an education in which character, values and morality may be given a strong, religious foundation.

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. Primarily these private schools provide a high-priced service for elite families willing to pay, but some also have programs for limited numbers of low-income students.

“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 function in much the same way as a nonprofit organization. Charter schools have provided greater flexibility to meet local needs, new approaches to education, schools designed to focus on specific segments of the community, etc.

Tutoring and mentoring programs for underprivileged or at-risk children provide opportunities for your congregation or local ministry to cooperate with the public schools in your community. After-school programs can be provided in your facilities in collaboration with both public and private schools in your community. If your congregation has families who have children in the public schools—especially at the secondary level—there is also the opportunity of informal, pastoral visits on campus or the formation of an after-school club for Bible study or some other religious purpose. This can be a fruitful avenue for youth evangelism.

Community colleges—sometimes called “junior” colleges where they offer only the first two years of a four-year college degree are operated either by the public school district or by a government organization specific to the community college. Community colleges bring higher education to large numbers of people, and these campuses provide an opportunity for campus ministry.



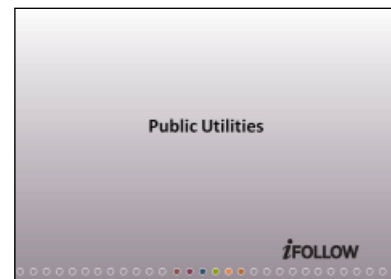
State universities are usually massive institutions and there are only a few communities in each state where these campuses exist. If a state university is located in your community, it is likely a major industry with many of the residents employed by the university. Have you inquired to find out how 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—usually 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 not so dominate in the community. Because they are private institutions, each has its own rules with regard to campus ministry group.

Public Utilities

Electrical power and natural gas are usually supplied to homes by for-profit corporations which 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. Recently, some states have begun to experiment with how competition can be introduced among power companies.

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. (See the section above on government.) Do you know who provides these services in your community?



The utilities are vital to the growth and economic health of your community. If sufficient electrical power, water and sewer capacity are not available, then new businesses will not come to your area and there may not be a sufficient supply of jobs for people. The construction industry is especially dependent on the availability of public utilities.

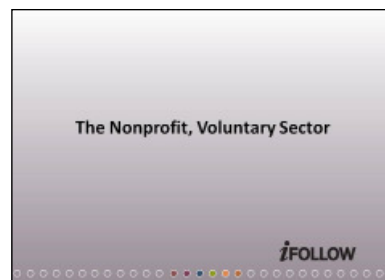
There are two ways in which the public utilities are potentially important to outreach in your community. Number one, the power companies and other utilities are a good source of information about new families moving into the community. In fact, there are service bureaus that gather these names and addresses from the public utilities across the country and then will sell you a subscription so that once a month you

will get labels with the names and addresses of all the newcomer households in specific Zip Code areas. People who have recently moved into the community may be looking for a church or at a point in their life where they are more willing to consider attending church, and research has shown that these new arrivals are more likely to join the Adventist Church. So this list is a valuable tool in pointing you to individuals who are more likely to respond to evangelistic advertising or offers for Bible studies.

Secondly, the public utilities have programs to assist low-income households who get behind in their payments for electric power, heating fuel, etc. They often seek the cooperation of faith-based community service agencies in administering these funds. If your Community Service Center has volunteers who have attained certification as intake interviewers or caseworkers, they can document the needs of families and help them qualify for assistance with their utilities in emergency situations.

The Nonprofit, Voluntary 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 government role has been decreasing for nearly 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 1.4 million in 1992. Some 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. Handout 2 defines the various services which are delivered by these organizations. Depending on the size and geographic location of your community, some of these agencies may be located outside the community, serving a larger area made up of several communities. Other agencies are entirely local. There are five kinds of nonprofit community service organizations in most communities.

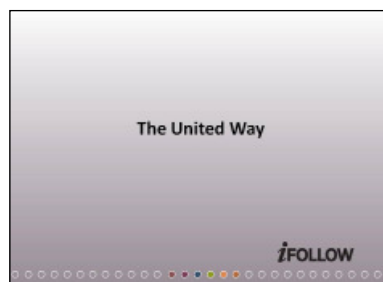
Large, national agencies have branches in almost every community. This includes the Salvation Army, Red Cross, YMCA, Urban League, Catholic Charities, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts and others. These are established, powerful organizations with strong support bases that they 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 “case” for the funds to be raised. Your community probably has a United Way organization or is part of one for the larger metropolitan area. It specializes in “workplace giving,” in which larger 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 and 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 two things have changed this traditional pattern.



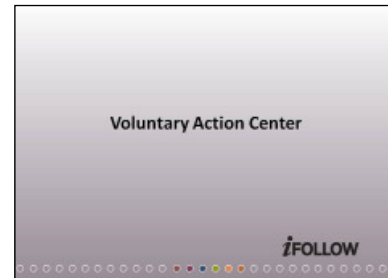
1. More and more donors want to designate where the funds they donate go, and most (but not all) local United Way organizations have begun to pass through donations to any tax-exempt, charitable organization that is designated by a donor. This means that local Adventist Community Services units—those with “Affiliate” status—can get funds through the United Way.

2. Many 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.

The United Way is always an important organization in the community because it is a good source of information. United Way staff usually have a “big picture” view of what is going on in the community, the needs, new programs, etc.

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 “clearinghouse” 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 President George 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” that President Bush originated.



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.

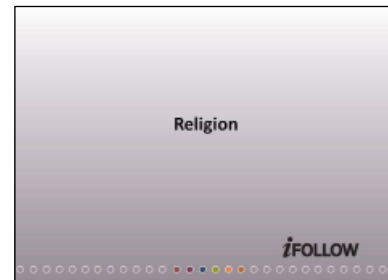
In your community, in every community, there are a growing number of nonprofit **collaborations, coalitions, partnerships, and alliances**. Instead of starting a new organization, the common approach to a new problem today is to get a number of the existing organizations to work together. This is a new approach which has been recognized as a national trend. “Rather than aiming to carve out an entirely distinct niche for itself, ... the new efforts to help with community problems ... forms loose alliances with the many other groups already working in the community, including government-funded organizations such as schools and police departments as well as voluntary organizations such as churches.” This type of organization “has relatively little administrative structure of its own.... Volunteers are drawn in to work on specific projects.” (Wuthnow, pages 20-21) These cooperative efforts present real opportunities for your church or local ministry to get involved in worthwhile efforts in the community without needing to invest in expensive facilities, staffing or arrangements.



Religion

In a previous session we reviewed the religious profile of our community. More attention will be given here to the various interfaith organizations and the relationships between the churches and religious groups in our community.

The larger churches and dominant religions are the most visible in your community. These are the churches that most unchurched individuals think of if they decide to try a church for some reason. The pastors from these churches are the ones that are most often invited to participate in civic groups. Among community leaders and the media, the pastors of these churches are an important reference group. If your church is known to these clergy, then they can affirm its legitimacy when they may be asked about it. It is important that we communicate with these religious leaders to make sure that they have factual information about the Adventist Church although they disagree with our message.



Smaller, more conservative religious groups are typically less involved in the community. They tend to “keep to themselves,” and are often seen by community leaders as somewhat irrelevant to the needs and issues within the community. The pastors of these groups are not often invited to community meetings, and invitations that they may extend to civic leaders to participate in special events are often ignored.



The **Ministerial Association** is an informal gathering of the pastors and religious leaders in the community. Almost every community has one, although these groups sometimes stop functioning for a while. It is usually not an official ecumenical organization and 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. It is well worth your time to make contact with the ministerial association in your community.

There may also be a **Council of Churches**, a formal ecumenical 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 significant dues to be paid, and often the council has a part-time or full-time staff director.

The Adventist Church, as a matter of principle, does not usually join a Council of Churches, although there may be specific projects with which your congregation may want to cooperate.

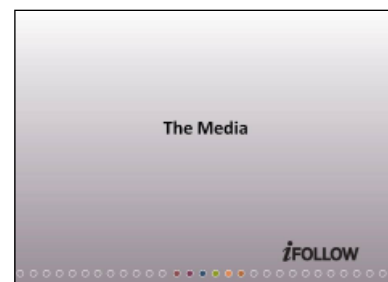
A newer interfaith structure is a **community ministry organization** which will have a mix of individuals and congregations among its constituents, and may ask for donations from congregations or pastors who do not wish to become regular members. This is usually takes the form of a faith-based community 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. Relatively few communities have a community ministry organization, and the extent to which it may provide opportunities for cooperation or information in your community depends entirely on what activities and goals it may be involved in and how those relate to the mission of the Adventist Church.



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 evangelistic strategy for your congregation.

The media are powerful primarily because they set the “agenda” for conversations and issues in your community. Community leaders may 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.

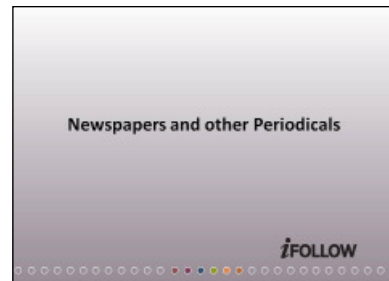
Daily papers are the original mass media. Before radio and television, most cities of any size had several daily papers and up-dated editions throughout the day. Now, only a handful of cities have two or more daily newspapers. The daily papers cover large metropolitan areas instead of local communities. This makes it more difficult to target your messages to a particular area and also makes it more difficult and expensive to get information published. A growing number of the largest dailies are carrying special sections for suburban regions, and the advertising costs are reduced in these special sections which often appear only once a week.

Daily papers are highly visible. If your community is in a metropolitan area, a much higher percentage of the people in your community read the daily newspaper than read the local, suburban newspaper. Other media are much more likely to pick up an interesting story from the daily newspaper than they are from a suburban weekly paper. Most of the adults with jobs in your suburban community commute into the city to work, and in the work place, the daily paper is the source of conversation, while suburban papers are hardly ever mentioned. Consequently a story published in the daily paper may actually have greater impact on the residents of your local community than one published in the local weekly paper.

There are two ways to get your message into a newspaper. One is to convince a reporter that your story is worth publishing as news; and the other is to purchase advertising. Getting a story published is a lot less expensive than buying an ad, and it also requires highly specialized expertise. When you convince a journalist to publish your story, you have very little control over how it will appear or when. When you buy an ad, you can publish almost anything that you wish, although it is wise to get the help of an expert in preparing the ad or you run the risk of wasting a great deal of money.

The high cost of ads in daily papers and the difficulty of getting news stories carried in large, daily papers both mean that the Adventist churches and institutions from throughout a metropolitan area need to work together in dealing with these media. Coordinated advertising in daily papers is much more powerful than piece-meal ads in suburban weekly papers, but it may require funding from the conference to make it financially feasible. At least, it requires several Adventist congregations working together.

Placing news stories in daily papers requires the same kind of cooperation. Only



individuals with some experience and training in public relations are likely to be successful in getting news carried by a large, daily newspaper. In many metropolitan areas there may be only one or two such individuals among the membership of all the Adventist churches in the area. The best way to deal with daily papers is to find this kind of person and ask them to be news representative for all the Adventist congregations in the metropolitan area. Perhaps a communications coordinating committee can be formed so that representatives from all of the churches can meet with the media contact person once a month to plan possible stories. Another approach is to ask the media relations professional at an Adventist institution in the metropolitan area to act as the spokesman for all of the local churches. Where there is an Adventist community service agency, such an organization makes the best possible media relations office for the churches throughout a metropolitan area. A community-based agency of this kind will find it easier to place stories on behalf of local churches than will an institution's public relations officer.

Weekly papers are more community-oriented and have far fewer staff; therefore it is much easier to get your story published in these papers. Most weekly papers are delighted to get news releases and will publish most releases that are truly local and written in proper news style. They are particularly interested in photographs because they often pay their own photographers on contract; each picture in print costs them something. If you have an appropriate photo of good quality, you are almost guaranteed of getting into print!

The cost of ads is also usually much less in weekly papers than in daily papers. The circulation of the weekly paper in your community is considerably less than that of the daily paper, so you can purchase an ad for a much lower price. The readership is also much more narrowly focused to your particular community instead of spread across the entire metropolitan area. Adventist ministries have had good success in using newspaper ads over recent years for Revelation Seminars and other kinds of public evangelism, as well as for the Heartbeat community coronary risk evaluation program. Tested ads are available for both of these purposes, and there are several packages available with proven ads that either encourage people to attend special events at your church or market specific doctrines, offering informational booklets and Bible lessons. (See Resources section.) If you develop ads locally, remember that you may need to try several different kinds before you find one that will get a response.

Metropolitan area magazines provide much more expensive advertising, but they also often include "Calendar of Activities" sections which are relatively easy to get listings in. The key to getting your events into these listings is to carefully read the instructions in the magazine relative to when and how to submit information, and to keep in mind that this is a secular publication interested only in public service events, such as health and family life seminars, and music or arts events such as concerts. The

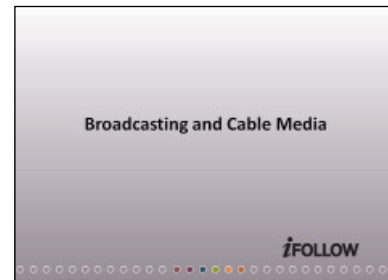
lead time for these magazines is greater than any other media in your community. This requires planning months ahead.

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.

Television stations focus on a large metropolitan area and have relatively little time for local news programming. Consequently, it is difficult to get television coverage for your story. In the larger metro areas, it is even more difficult. For example, the religion reporter at one Washington D.C. television station told me that she produces only one two-minute story per week. With vacation time, etc., that means only about 45 stories per year in a metropolitan area with hundreds of neighborhoods and thousands of congregations. In order to pitch a story successfully to a television station requires significant skill, experience and time.

Radio stations are more specialized than television outlets, and there are more radio stations than television stations. The focus of a radio station is dictated, in large part, by the size of its coverage area. Some radio stations—especially the FM broadcasters—specialize in certain kinds of programming across the metro region, while others—more typically, the AM stations—specialize geographically in smaller sections of the metropolitan area. The largest number of radio stations specialize in various kinds of music formats because most listeners use the radio as background while they drive, shave, prepare meals or work. There is a growing number of “talk” stations and most metro areas now have at least one “all news” station. Obviously, the stations that carry more news also have a much larger appetite for news stories and are more likely to carry your story. Radio station news staff often work under tremendous time pressures and are less willing to listen to someone “pitch” a story to them than are television or newspaper personnel; they like a very concise “advisory” or news release.

Most television and radio stations have a number of interview or panel programs, some of them devoted to local civic affairs. The producers are always looking for interesting guests to have on these shows. For example, if you are having a speaker for a family life seminar or a special-emphasis Sabbath, this person may be an expert



in some topic of interest to a local producer. These programs almost never specialize in religion, so you are more likely to get a guest on the air if you leave religion out of your description of the person and position their expertise in terms of secular concerns. The producers of talk shows are often not a part of the news department at a broadcast station, especially at television stations and at those radio stations which devote more time to various kinds of talk programming.

Cable television has become more and more important over the last couple of decades. It was originally simply a technology for connecting homes to an improved “community antenna,” and began in fringe areas of the broadcast pattern where a neighborhood might be located “behind a mountain,” for example. With the advent of satellite technology, more and more specialized cable channels have been created, greatly expanding what is offered on television. Today almost all American homes are connected to cable systems and the large number of “extra” channels on cable have a greater share of the audience than the traditional broadcast stations.

In fact, television is no longer truly a “mass medium.” It has become highly specialized with a news channel, a history channel, a weather channel, etc. In fact, we are in the second stage of this specialization trend. Cable television no longer has a single all-news channel, it has multiple headline news channels, financial news channels, sports news channels, etc. In fact, the number of channels available on the latest technology is so great that most people no longer flip through the channels looking for something interesting. Instead, they use some kind of electronic indexing software to click immediately to the topics in which they are interested. This means that today nine out of ten Americans never look at any religious television programming, and those who do go directly to a religion channel of their liking. The concept of an Adventist cable channel with real evangelistic impact has become old technology almost before it was born.

Cable television systems were established on the basis of a community franchise. That is, the city or county government selected one cable company for each community to be the one to lay cables and operate the system. In most communities, the franchise agreement includes a provision for one, two or three “public access” channels. Any nonprofit community organization can place material on a public access channel, including churches. Sometimes there is a minimal service charge, and often there are limits as to how often you can get time. Depending on the level of demand for public access time, the cable company may reserve the right to select the time your material is released. It is important to keep in mind that there is no automatic audience for public access channel programming. Unless you pass the word or do collateral advertising, it is likely that no one will view any programming you place on a public access channel.

Advertising can be purchased in the electronic media. These “commercials” or spots are generally more expensive than newspaper advertising and have to be carefully

planned and placed or they may end up not being seen at all. Some Adventist churches have had success with radio and television ads for public meetings, and there is information available on how to make use of this medium as well as spots on tape to which your local identification and phone number can be added. Broadcast advertising by churches is rare enough that sometimes it is perceived as a novelty by local journalists and results in stories in the newspaper, etc.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are like advertising spots, except that they are given away free by the electronic media to nonprofit community groups. In past years the Federal Communications Commission required that radio and television stations provide a certain minimum number of PSAs on a regular basis, but in the last couple of decades these legal requirements have been gutted. Most stations still carry PSAs, although a greatly reduced number. They typically have rigid requirements in terms of timing, format and method of submission. Some refuse to carry any PSA which indicates that there is even a modest fee for the event. Cable companies are often more open in what they will accept and carry almost everything that comes in on a channel where there is a constant “roll” of on-screen (without audio) announcements. Cable companies may also charge a small fee for the placement of these announcements. If you contact the radio and television stations, and the cable company, these organizations usually have guidelines telling you how to submit PSAs and giving format and content requirements. You cannot rely on PSAs to get a crowd for an event; their primary value is that they are free.

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 highway and street billboards. In rural areas there are still a few billboards that belong to a local landowner. Billboards 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. For real impact, the same message needs to be placed on a number of billboards throughout the community at the same time. This medium is can be costly. The cost includes the actual manufacture of the large panels as well as the rental cost of the space.



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. Usually the office or advertising company that handles these requires a certain minimum buy of a number of placements and you may or may not be able to control the placement of the ads to specific neighborhoods or routes.

Outdoor advertising companies do provide a limited amount of free, public service

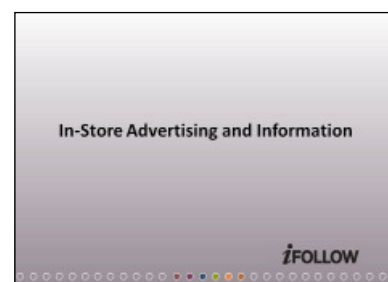
space for local nonprofit organizations. The rules about who qualifies and how to get consideration for public service ads seem to be different in each metropolitan area, but none of these companies consider religion to be a public service. Public service ads are only available for community service 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 most companies and nonprofit organizations with small budgets for promotion and 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 or telephone prefixes. Some advertisers are experimenting with Fax and Email advertising also, and there are a burgeoning number of websites, including high-traffic commercial sites that sell advertising in the form of brief messages that stream through small displays on pages where people are primarily looking for various kinds of other information.



These 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,” etc. Direct mail can be used by your congregation or local ministry 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. Because it gets results with relatively small investments in time and money, direct mail advertising is the most practical communication medium available to your church or ministry. That is why it is widely used in public evangelism, seminar outreach, etc.

In-store advertising and information is another medium that may have escaped your attention. If you look around near the entrance or exit at the supermarket, you will likely find a bulletin board and/or literature rack. For the larger supermarket chains and in major metropolitan areas these facilities are actually managed by a specialized agency. They often include a number of periodicals that use this channel for their circulation instead of home delivery, the mail, or the commercial magazine displays and newsstands. These periodicals are free to the consumer and make their money entirely from advertising. Included in this category are periodicals aimed at people looking to rent an apartment or buy a home, new parents, etc. This is a channel that nonprofit organizations and churches can use, either by purchasing



advertising in some of these periodicals or requesting circulation of your brochures through these displays in supermarkets.

Handout in this Package

1. Defining the Scope of Community Services



iFollow
Discipleship
Series:
Working
with Jesus

Action Plan
& Presenter
Notes

**U.Y.C. Part
Six: Commu-
nity Systems**

Additional Resources

Calkins, Ann (1998). *How to Place Newspaper Advertising*. Lincoln, NE: AdventSource. (Includes three ads designed to let your community know about your church.)

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

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

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

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

Rittenour, Curtis (1995). *Welcome Home*. Center for Creative Ministry. (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.)

Sahlin, Monte et al (2000). *Ministries of Compassion*. Lincoln, NE: AdventSource.

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.

Urban Ministry News Notes, Spring 1992

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

Resource Center

The Center for Creative Ministry is one of the resource and information centers affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. It provides training, information and consultants that can assist local churches and ministries in developing community outreach projects and collaborations with community organizations. The center can be reached at www.creativeministry.org or (800) 272-4664.

The Center for Urban Ministry is one of the study centers affiliated with the General Conference Office of Global Mission. It is located in the H. M. S. Richards Building on the campus of Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Maryland. It provides training, technical assistance and consultants to assist local groups in developing urban outreach projects.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Jesus' analogy of the church as "a city on a hill" fit with the information contained in this unit? Is it possible to get too involved? What are the dangers and rewards of involvement?
2. Look again at the list of community systems in the unit: government, business and industry, health care and disease prevention, school system and education, public utilities, nonprofit and voluntary sector, religion, and the media. Which of these systems do we automatically align with? Which are our churches less likely to be involved with? Are there any that seem strange or foreign to church involvement? Which ones and why? Are there ways we could utilize these systems, already in place, to increase our visibility and our ministry to those in our communities?
3. Share which of these ideas, perhaps new ones, are now calling to your particular heart, your skill set, your spiritual gifts.

Group Activity

There are a number of urban simulation games available that can help a group learn and understand the dynamics that go into community systems; the various roles that leaders and groups play as decisions are made about aspects of the infrastructure of the community. An example is given here where the focus is on land use, one of the most basic of community systems which resurfaces again and again in various issues. Similar games could be developed focusing on many other issues such as health care, education, etc.

Purpose: Participants become involved in trying to solve some land-use issues for this city. They role play common interests and find out how land-use decisions are often made.

Preparation: (1) You will need a room large enough to accommodate five to six tables that will seat up to six participants per table. The room also needs to accommodate an additional large table with chairs and an easel large enough to be seen from anywhere in the room. (2) Look up population figures for the towns in your area, so that the simulated city, Centerplace, has meaning for the students. (3) Arrange for a smaller room nearby to accommodate up to 10 persons, a large table and easel. (4) Provide the needed supplies: One set of four to five different colors of markers for each table; a set of markers for the facilitator and a set for use in the small room. Two easels with flip charts, two sheets of flip chart paper for each table and a roll masking tape or way to fix paper to walls.

Activity: 1. Set the stage by giving a quick overview of what will take place: During this activity we will participate in a simulation game concerning land-use in a hypothetical community, analyze what we have done, and discuss some ideas about the dynamics and systems in our community. The techniques we will use combine elements of simulations, role-playing and games. You will assume the roles of decision-makers in a simulated community and compete for certain objectives according to specified procedures and rules.

2. Distribute Activity Sheet A. Read the problem to the group: The problem is to identify some possible uses for the one-square mile (640 acres) of county farm land, four miles northwest of the city. It is now available for the city's use. Ask participants to read the information given on the activity sheet and list possible uses of the land to meet the city needs. "You have 10 minutes. Work individually."

3. When most people are writing possible land uses on their list, then go ahead and ask the following questions. Write all their comments on a flip chart. This works best when one facilitator is asking the questions and another person or two is writing answers on flip charts. Number the items to simplify identification later. (1) What are some possible uses for the undeveloped land? When you feel you have enough material, ask the next question. (2) Which of these possible uses are similar? Designate similar uses by letters, symbols, or colors. When most are designated, or the group seems to run out of thoughts, **stop**. Change items among categories if the participants change their minds. Don't get

bogged down in the details of grouping; if some people think one use should be in another category, put that use in both categories and go on to the next step. (3) What title could we give to all the items in the same category? For example, recreation, industrial, utilities, housing, commercial, etc.

4. Have the group separate into the number of land-use categories. Groups should not be more than six persons. Assign one of the categories to each group for them to represent. One way to set up groups is to have the total group count off by the number of categories identified.

5. Hand out Activity Sheet B. Inform participants they have 10 minutes to list and analyze the advantages and disadvantages of possible uses for the vacant land in the assigned category. They may consider those listed on the board plus any other possible uses they can think of in their category. It is important to stress that this activity is to analyze the uses of the land.

6. Tell the groups their next activity is to develop a land-use plan for the area in their assigned land-use category for about 20 minutes. **Note:** See Step 7 below for additional direction after each group has started planning. If all directions are given at first, many groups start drawing a map before considering different land uses.

7. Five minutes into their planning make the following announcements: (A) We have just received word that due to the current workload from reading environmental impact statements the members of the Board of County Commissioners have all been reassigned. Each group has one minute to elect one member to represent them on the Board. (B) Will the new Board representatives please follow ----- out of this room.

8. One of the facilitators takes the new “Board” to another room, hands out and reviews Activity Sheet C with them. Tell them they have 15 minutes until the meeting begins. Have them concentrate on evaluation criteria first. Have them elect a chair person to preside over the group presentations. Have chair person read the announcements at bottom of Activity Sheet C.

7. After the new Board members leave the main room, announce to the table groups: You have about 15 minutes to finish your plan and develop a three-minute presentation for the County Board of Commissioners. The presentation must include a visual display such as a land-use map, and more than one person in each group must participate in making the presentation. Pass out felt pens and large paper. Be aware that you may have to give some extra time to finish plans and maps.

8. When all groups are ready, the County Board enters and sits at the front. A time-keeper is appointed to cut off all presentations at three minutes (with a one-minute warning). Chairperson announces criteria on based on Activity Sheet C announcements and adheres to them. (Presentations will take 45 to 50 minutes, depending on how many table groups there are.)

9. When the presentations are complete, the Board retires to the smaller room to select the best proposal (5 to 10 minutes).
10. While Board is meeting, each table group develops a list of criteria which they think should be used in choosing among the plans submitted.
11. County Board re-enters the room and reads their criteria aloud. Then the Board announces their decision and gives their reasons. Board adjourns.
12. The facilitator must move rapidly to the next question to avoid shouting matches between losing groups. Have Board members return to the groups who selected them. The main purpose is to evaluate the process, not to get bogged down in the content of the simulated issue and competition between groups.
13. Ask participants: What additional data would you like to have had for planning your group's proposal? List their response on the flip chart or chalk board. (Topography, vegetation, economy of the area, railroad, shopping center, adjacent land, climate, soil survey, historical information, flood plain, wildlife, interest of board of control, money available, educational needs, regulations by State, existing zoning, political climate, demographics, etc.)
14. Point out to the group that this is one of the most important parts of the activity because it emphasizes that we need a variety of information and data before we can intelligently make a land management or environmental decision to best meet the needs of the whole community. This list has many of the elements that need to be considered in studying a local environmental issue or concern.
15. Ask the group to step back from the simulation and act as observers in their mind for a while: (A) Did leaders emerge during this session? What factors enabled this to happen? (B) Did the group at your table work as a team? What did your group do to ensure participation by all members of the group? (C) Were you assigned to a group or interest you didn't want to represent? How did you feel? Point out that many times we overlook that other people have different needs and ideas and this might be a way to identify them.

Debriefing: Be sure to take at least 10 or 15 minutes to debrief the simulation with questions such as: How did you feel about participating in this game? What did you learn about how community systems work? How might this same approach be applied to issues related to health care or education or the needs of the poor?

Timing: The entire exercise will take 60 to 90 minutes or a little longer. If you have more than 20 participants, it will likely take two hours. Be sure to pay attention to the time factors in the game process and stay on the time line.

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/after-care, and counseling, as well as self-help groups that use the “12 Step” approach pioneered by Alcoholics 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, homemaking 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, often through the county governments, 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.