WHY REPORT?
Personal Ministries Leaflets

No.

1. The Missionary Program of the Church
2. Personal Ministries Leader
3. Church Personal Ministries Secretary
4. Church Member Participation in Soul Winning
5. Why Report?
6. Training for Witnessing
7. Visiting With Literature
8. Community Services
9. Prison Ministry
10. Challenge of Unentered Areas
11. Bible Studies
12. Lay Preaching and Adventist Men
13. Discover Bible School
14. Ingathering Evangelism
15. Interest Coordinator
16. An Appeal
Reporting—a Plan of Divine Origin

“Order is heaven’s first law”—and this law embraces a system of reports that is of vital importance.

The Bible is God’s report to man of the work of Creation, of the plan of salvation, of the incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ. It is also an accurate record of reports of work done at many different times and places and by many different persons.

In Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, Moses reports concerning the work God appointed him to do, and all through the Old Testament we find men and women of God, telling of the work that the Lord did through them. The various lines of missionary work reported in old times are brought to view as follows:

The little maid who was a servant in the home Naaman, captain of the host of the King of Syria, was a medical missionary, giving treatments to her mistress and spending many hours in Christian help work. She also invited Naaman to a meeting where Elisha, the prophet of the Lord, told him of his duty, and she won at least one soul for God — the wealthy and powerful Naaman, who was healed of his leprosy, and testified, “Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel” (2 Kings 5:15).

Joseph, an exile in Egypt, provided many meals for famine-stricken people, visited those in prison, and went through all the land, proclaiming the message that God had given to him and preparing the people for the time of famine (Gen. 41:37-57).

Daniel observed the Morning Watch (Dan. 6:10), made a temperance pledge (Dan. 1:8), gave Bible readings to the king, and Daniel and his friends led him to make a complete surrender to God (Dan. 3:16-18, 28-30, 4:24-37).

Esther, a Jewish maiden who had been made queen, risked her life to make a missionary visit in the interests of the Jewish race, and thereby saved her people (Esther 4:16).

Nehemiah solicited funds from the king with which to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, and also obtained credentials from the king recommending him to the “governors beyond the river” (Neh. 2:1-9).

Imperishable records are kept in heaven, and the angels are the reporters. The angel commissioned to set a mark upon God’s people carried an “inkhorn by his side,” and he “reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me” (Eze. 9:11).

“Angels keep a faithful record of every man’s work.”—Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 198.

Jesus Recognized the Value of Reports

Jesus made a report to His Father concerning His work on earth, as recorded in John 17:4-8. The twelve disciples on returning from their first missionary tour held a missionary meeting at which Jesus presided, and they “told [reported to] him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught” (Mark
6:30; see Luke 9:10). “Now the apostles gathered to meet Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught” (Mark 6:30, Moffatt). Since the early disciples reported everything they did, modern disciples should also be faithful in reporting.

Apostles Faithful in Making Reports

Paul and Barnabas “rehearsed [reported] all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27). “They declared all things that God had done with them,” “declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them” (Acts 15:4, 12). Here is a modern translation of Acts 14:27: “They gathered the church together and reported how God had been with them, what he had done, and how he had opened a door into faith for the Gentiles” (Moffatt; also see Phillips’ translation).

The New Testament Book of Reports

An entire book of the New Testament is dedicated to the acts of the apostles. This is a thirty-year summary of the missionary endeavors of the early church, and the record stands as an inspiring incentive to valiant deeds of Christian service in all periods through which the church militant must pass until she becomes the church triumphant.

Spirit of Prophecy Emphasis on Reporting

To the remnant church special instruction is given as to the requirements of God in the matter of reporting:

“Those who have united with the Lord in the covenant of service are under bonds to unite with Him in the great, grand work of soul saving. Let church members, during the week, act their part faithfully, and on the Sabbath relate their experience. The meeting will then be as meat in due session, bringing to all present new life and fresh vigor.”—Testimonies, vol. 7, p. 19.

“Let those who gain such an experience in working for the Lord write an account of it for our papers, that others may be encouraged. . . . These reports should find a place in our papers, for they are far-reaching in their influence. They will be as sweet fragrances in the church, a savor of life. Thus it is seen that God works with those who co-operate with Him.”—Ibid., p. 336.

Present-Day Reporting System

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination has a very complete system of reporting, by which those who occupy positions of responsibility in any part of the world can keep in touch with the progress of the worldwide message. Through it the leaders at headquarters can find the places that require reinforcement and discern the weak points that need strengthening. Without this reporting system, much of the unity and harmony of our work would be lost, and the progress of the warning message very seriously delayed. This system embraces the entire church membership, and includes verbal and written reports of personal experience and statistics of a varied nature.
True Objective in Reporting

Christians who are faithful in the duty of reporting desire only that the accounting of their experiences and volume of service may redound to the glory of God, and serve as a means to “provoke unto love and to good works.”

By their good works, Christ’s followers are to bring glory, not to themselves, but to Him through whose grace and power they have wrought. It is through the Holy Spirit that every good work is accomplished, and the Spirit is given to glorify, not the receiver, but the Giver. When the light of Christ is shining in the soul, the lips will be filled with praise and thanksgiving to God. Your prayers, your performance of duty, your benevolence, your self-denial, will not be the theme of your thought or conversation. Jesus will be magnified, self will be hidden, and Christ will appear as all in all.”—Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 80, 81.

Why Report?

For Information.—In military affairs we have an illustration of the value of an adequate reporting system. The general of the army is required to know every movement of every regiment and the actual conditions existing within each regiment. He depends upon his captains, lieutenants, and petty officers to secure this information accurately and promptly. The officers of any army recognize that it would be impossible to maintain the high morals of the army, and lead the forces into successful combat, without the perfect functioning of a reporting system touching the smallest details of army life.

The same principle applies in the army of the church. “The church of Christ may be fitly compared to an army.”—Christian Service, p. 82. Upon the remnant church rests the responsibility of giving to the world the last message of hope, and there is but a short time granted in which to accomplish the work. It is therefore very important that the leaders in God’s cause should be able to know just what is being done along all lines of service, in order that all efforts may be so directed as to accomplish the most good. When the leaders do not know what is being done they cannot plan intelligently for what remains to be done. In the plan of organization operating within the church through specific instruction of the Spirit of Prophecy, each branch of the Lord’s work includes a reporting system, which enables the leaders in each particular branch to know what is being done and to plan intelligently for advance work. The combined report of all these branches enables the General Conference officers to direct wisely the movement of the entire church.

For Encouragement.—“As followers of Christ we should make our words such as to be a help and an encouragement to one another in the Christian life.”—Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 338. There is something heartening and stimulating about the friendly mutual interchanges in service. God blesses His people in a peculiar way through each other. There is always something new in the realm of spiritual things to be learned when soul winners get together. This is partly because the work itself is so full of variety, ever producing new and interesting experiences. The soul-winning program of the church is a progressive movement, and produces continuous reports of a new and vital nature.
To Glorify God.—The missionary reports of the apostolic church led those who heard the reports to glorify God (see Acts 21:19, 20); and the Saviour said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

Who Should Report

Everyone, old and young, male and female, isolated or in groups, is called to share in the responsibility of service and also the important responsibility of reporting the work done, making it possible for the denomination to keep full and accurate statistics.

The reporting system is a chain extending from the individual church member to administrative headquarters; and just as a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, so the reporting system is weakened by neglect or failure anywhere along the line. “The law of service becomes the connecting link which binds us to God and to our fellow men.”—Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 326.

How and When to Report

There are two forms of missionary reports—verbal and written. Verbal reports may be given at the prayer and weekly ten-minute service, and at all times and in all places where testimony of Christian experience and work is appropriate.

Written reports conform to a system that begins with the individual missionary report and extends to the report made by the church personal ministries secretary, the conference personal ministries director, the union conference personal ministries director, and the report by the division directors, ending in the office of the General Conference Department of Personal Ministries, where summaries, quarterly and annually, Ingathering, and Community Services figures are compiled for release to the world field, for their publicity use and for permanent record at the headquarters of the denomination.

The recommended method of individual reporting is by the use of individual report cards. As far as possible, each member should fill out his own report card and designate his age group. Each Sabbath School teacher should take individual reports at the beginning of the Sabbath school lesson period. (See General Conference session action, Review and Herald, June 21, 1966.)

Where the classes are set up as missionary bands with a leader assigned to each class, it is recommended that the band leader take the report during the time allotted for this purpose.

“A good report maketh the bones fat” (Prov. 15:30).

The Goal—100-Per-Cent-Reporting Membership

The goal, toward which there should be constant aim, is 100-per-cent-reporting membership. The attainment of this goal depends on every church member’s being a missionary worker and a reporter. In order to bring this about, it is essential that the church personal ministries secretary and the band leaders keep an accurate record of every individual church member, and where there is failure on the part of any to report for any length of time, revive interest and re-establish members in the habit of reporting.
The importance of all members of a church faithfully reporting their Community Services work was brought forcefully to our attention by the experience of one of the churches in Denmark some years ago. A member of the church had died. She had made her will, which left 100,000 kroner to the church. However, the law of the land required that 60 per cent of all bequests (except to relatives) should go to the government. The authorities insisted that the church could receive only 40 per cent of the bequest, or 40,000 kroner.

Our church leaders went to a lawyer and placed the matter before him. He explained the law and pointed out that there was no way for the church to qualify unless they could prove that the entire church membership was actually engaged in Community Services work.

Then church leaders explained how the members did actually engage in missionary and Community Services work. The lawyer asked whether they could prove it. They insisted that they could, for they took up the reports every week in their church. The lawyer said, “Go to your church and bring me these weekly reports. I want to study them.”

They brought him all the reports. The lawyer was amazed. There he found the actual reports from these faithful members. They had maintained this practice for years. The lawyer went to the government authorities and from these reports proved that this church was actually an organization dedicated to missionary and Community Services work. As a result, the church was given the entire 100,000 kroner.

This actual experience should encourage every member of every church to be faithful in doing and faithful in reporting all his missionary and Community Services work done in his community.

**The Missionary Aim of the Remnant Church**

Every church member a missionary worker.

Every missionary worker a reporting member.

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