

"United in Jesus Proclaiming His Grace"

Vice President's Report to The 63rd Constituency Session Southern California Conference

It is a privilege to serve the Lord's church as Vice President of the Southern California Conference. Serving the constituents for the past four years has been a joy and a blessing! The office of the Vice President serves the field by providing information and church ministry materials through the Region Directors. Our services include, but are not limited to, these departments and ministries: Adventist Community Services, Religious Liberty, Disaster Response and "Share Him" Evangelism. It is also my responsibility to coordinate the conference-wide evangelism initiative, "Claim LA." It is my pleasure to share some insights with you regarding these areas of ministry in our conference.

Adventist Community Services (ACS)

Adventist Community Services Department is the descriptive label for a wide range of public services by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The services include but are not limited to help for the poor, health screening and health education, inner-city programs, family-life education, disaster relief, tutoring and mentoring, summer camp, soup kitchen, self-help groups, Crisis Care, Elder Care, Youth Empowered to Serve and addressing the AIDS epidemic. The Adventist Community Services organization is designed to provide structure to facilitate and support these services.

Each local Adventist church is asked by the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* to appoint a Community Service Director. This ACS officer meets collectively with the Federation leaders of the church once per quarter, on the second Sunday of the month at the conference office.

The following is a four-year report of the collective work of all the local Southern California Conference Adventist Community Services.

2007 – 2010 Community Services Report

Persons Helped	363,916
Number of volunteers	29,988
Hours of donated	260,610
Cash & value of goods donated	804,330
Pieces of clothing donated	385,436
Boxes/weight clothing donated (approx. 71,280 lbs. weight)	10,123
Furniture donated	512

Disaster Response

The Adventist Community Services organization is most widely known for its disaster-response program. For more than 100 years, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has provided emergency relief in times of disaster. In 1974, ACS signed an agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide assistance in the event of a federal disaster. The Southern California Conference has as its goal to train more than 2,000 individuals who could respond in the event of a disaster.

Services Provided

- 1) *Emergency Distribution of relief supplies:* Services will include collecting, processing and distributing groceries, drinking water, blankets, personal items, diapers, cleaning supplies, hand tools and plastic sheeting (when available).
- 2) *Warehouse Operations:* ACS operates inter-agency reception centers for truckloads of donated goods under contract with state and local governments.
- 3) *Training –* The SCC ACS Disaster Response Department established a goal of training 500 individuals, giving them a basic understanding of the mission and history (of ACSDR).

To date, more than 400 volunteers have been trained throughout the Southern California Conference territory to respond in times of disaster. We praise God for the faithfulness of His people!

Religious Liberty

Religious Liberty entails freedom of conscience: freedom to worship or not to worship, freedom to profess, practice and promulgate religious beliefs or to change them.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been involved in the ministry of supporting, protecting and defending religious freedom and human rights for all people everywhere since 1901. The Religious Liberty Department has represented the Seventh-day Adventist Church before governments, religious bodies, and international organizations.

The Southern California Conference is committed to the principal definition of religious freedom.

In the past four-years the SCC Religious Liberty Department has been able to help approximately 20 individuals with Sabbath work-related issues.

“The banner of truth and religious liberty held aloft by the founders of the gospel church and by God’s witnesses during the centuries that have passed since then, has in this last conflict been committed to our hands.” Acts of the Apostle, pp. 68-9.

What is our part?

First, we need to interact with leaders of other faith groups, standing with them when they face discrimination of any kind and asking them to stand with us in similar situations. The Southern California Conference is participating in three interfaith groups in the Los Angeles area, increasing others’ awareness of Adventism, partnering on community service projects at times and making Kingdom friends. In 2009 a group of members from one interfaith group traveled to the General Conference with our

representative, to get acquainted with world leaders there and to learn more about Seventh-day Adventism.

Secondly, we need to be informed on the issues that are before us as Seventh-day Adventists. What are some of the issues?

- Sunday Law issues on all levels
- Ordinances regarding dissemination of literature, charitable solicitation, zoning and permits
- Labor union problems
- Calendar reform
- Censorship
- Sabbath problems of all kinds: Employment, examinations and licensing tests.
- Unemployment compensation problems for lost jobs due to Sabbath worship
- Taxation of church and church school properties
- Laws affecting witnessing and public evangelism

Secondly, we need to make sure that our City, County, State and Federal government legislators receive Liberty Magazine so they can understand the full implications of these matters that threaten our religious freedoms.

SCC Religious Liberty Offerings 2007 – 2010

(Offerings are for Religious Liberty Magazine subscriptions, legal service fees to help people with Sabbath work-related issues and to promote religious liberty rallies conducted each fall.)

2007	\$20,546.25
2008	19,474.65
2009	20,481.06
2010	14,495.17
TOTAL	\$74,997.13

At the end of the day, Religious Liberty is about real people.

It's about a father who must go home and tell his wife and children that he lost his job for no other crime than keeping the Sabbath.

It's about a mother fleeing her country with her children, because if she stays, fundamentalist Islamic courts will take her children in retaliation for her giving her heart to Christ.

It's about men and women whose faithfulness has been rewarded by discrimination and brutality.

“It's our duty to do all in our power to avert the threatened danger.”

Testimonies, Vol. 5 p. 452.