

Targeting Your Church's Four Communication Audiences

Communication leaders sometimes are selected because of computer or online skills. These are critical in the work of communicating for your church, but the core of communication leadership is spiritual, because communicating is a ministry. Rev. 19:13 is one of many texts of Scripture that identify the Lord of communication ministry: “. . . and his name is called, The Word of God.” Our goal is to communicate Jesus, the Living Word, through every aspect and avenue possible, not only to our own members but to the community and beyond.

Secondly, the work of communication is filled with interesting things to do—publications, opportunities for telling about events to the community, making sure the church signage accurately and attractively represents the church, sending stories and photos about activities to the conference Communication Dept. for sharing with the Recorder and much more. In the midst of our legitimate “busyness,” it would be easy to assume that that is *all* that we do. In fact, church communicators minister to four special audiences.

The church is first audience.

If church members do not know what is happening or what is planned, how can they help, attend or invite? Communicating to the church and its visitors is clearly your first work, using whatever means your pastor or Board suggest.

The second major audience is the community.

Communication leaders can share special-event information and other newsworthy stories with local media as free publicity. It is used as space is available and if the editor considers your information of interest.

Develop a list of local media and contacts by consulting with the previous communication leader or other members; visit the local Chamber of Commerce website for a list of local media, or call to request one. Check the community website for media suggestions or send a website query. Survey local newsstands to learn what papers are sold there.

Where possible, arrange for display advertising and design/production of event posters/flyers.

Query about costs of church listings in local weekly papers or Pennysaver publications. (Some listings are free.)

The third major audience is the church at large.

If your church has news about a special event that drew community people and former members; if the church has helped in the community or had an unusual ministry experience, don't hoard your news, share it! Send stories about your church to the conference Communication Dept., so it can be shared in the conference newsletter or the Recorder and occasionally in the Review. Nonmembers and former Adventists also read both publications! Event news sent 6-8 weeks in advance may be included in the Pacific Union Recorder's monthly free calendar listings.

Website information tells potential visitors about your church and activities. It can be a contact point or referral option for parents whose young adult children may be in your area to attend a university or to work.

The conference website links to your church website, extending the church's reach.

Online visitors represent the fourth key audience.

When you develop an inviting website, arrange for it to be listed in Adventist and other online lists and in search engines to help heighten awareness of your church. Your church web presence will speak to church members locally and elsewhere who want to witness to friends or relatives in your area.

Pray for web visitors and remember them in your thinking as your web team adds features to the site. Having sermons in audio and/or video is a plus for nonattenders; many churches are putting their services online as well.