

GUIDELINES TO START A WELFARE SOCIETY

By Pastor L. Sanabria

National Director

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INTRODUCTION

As Christians we realise that as we seek to reach people for the Lord Jesus Christ, we need to be the agents of healing to all areas that have been affected by sin.

Being in the world and not of the world as Paul states has the implication of us dealing with social, economic and political issues and how they impact on our communities and society as a whole.

In other words the Church needs to always think beyond the walls of its buildings and pay attention to how it influences people regardless of their spiritual status or affiliation.

We as a denomination acknowledge this ministry and it is for that reason that we are committed to having welfare societies in all our local assemblies.

If we want to be effective in reaching people in need we must have a workable and accountable structure that complies with State laws.

This document seeks to help all assemblies to do the right thing the right way.

WHAT IS A WELFARE SOCIETY

This is that department in the assembly where members of the local church want to do something to help people who are in need. The people involved in this ministry are people who care about others and want to make a difference to their circumstances. Besides the members of the local assembly it is quite possible that people who are not members of the local church but want to identify with what the church is doing may be a part.

Never discourage anyone from being involved.

WELFARE SOCIETY STRUCTURE

a) Committee

It is recommended that there should be a committee of at least 6 persons, consisting of a chairperson, deputy chairperson, secretary and treasurer. Whilst the pastor is responsible for all that happens in the local church he/she does not have to be the chairperson of the welfare society.

A committee elected or appointed by the welfare society shall be in office for at least a year and be responsible for all projects under the umbrella of the local assembly.

b) Responsibilities

The committee and the rest of the welfare society should have a meeting to identify all the needs in the local community and the assembly.

Once the needs are identified it is important that all should agree as to what are the priority issues, and decide to address these areas.

It is then time to get all the committee and society members into action to minister to these needs.

c) Accountability

The welfare society and your projects need to be registered with the region and with the national office of our welfare department.

This is done in writing to the region requesting them to provide you with a letter of recommendation which you will send together with a letter of application to our national office.

Your letter of application should include a short summary of what you are doing or planning together as well as the full names, positions, personal details, residential and postal addresses and telephone details of all the committee members.

d) Legal Requirements

All welfare societies must purchase a copy of the welfare constitution from our head office.

A banking account must be opened in the name of the welfare society and the society must also be registered as an employer with the S.A. Revenue Services. In both cases you need to take the welfare constitution with the relevant application so that they can ensure that you have proper registration.

All letters regarding welfare must have the NPO and PBO numbers printed on them and must also state that they are under the auspices of the National Council of Operation Compassion South Africa

Our welfare department enjoys Section 18A status which means that receipts must be given for all money and goods in kind received so that the donor can make a claim against income tax.

SARS requires that all receipts must state that the donation has been made in terms of Section 18A of the Income Tax Act and must include the full details of the donor plus their contact details.

e) Monitoring and Evaluation

Every year a copy of your report as per the NPO format must be completed and sent to the national office.

The annual income and expenditure statements must be sent to the national office with the financial year end being 31 March.

These income and expenditure statements must be audited by an external accounting officer.

Requests for the renewal of the use of the NPO number should be sent to the national office by the end of February of each year.

Records including names and addresses of all those who benefit from your programme must be kept. This is important if we want to access money from businesses and the State. Statistics show the need and value of the programme.