

## Satellite Services Paper No. OCCG-043

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** A discussion of using the Sunday morning Bible Class period and Sunday evening worship service time to hold worship services at local nursing homes.

### REPORT:

In early November about 40 years ago, our congregation received a phone call from a couple of old soldiers of the cross requesting communion. They were Reece and Mattie Grubs.

Having seen numerous attempts at faithfully taking communion to shut-ins on Sunday afternoon fail, we developed the following plan for Satellite Services to assist nursing home residents which has continued to be successful for more than 40 years.

The Satellite Services were an extension of our regular services at the regular times in a different place rather than a new service at a new (and inconvenient) time.

We chose to service two nursing homes, one at our 9:00 a.m. Bible Class time and one at our 6:00 p.m. evening service time.

The premises that these services were based on were:

1. The services would be held at the regular service times of our congregation.
  - a. This was to promote the “realness” of the services in the minds of the participants because it was “church time” and
  - b. It would mean that the workers would simply go to the nursing homes instead of the services at the main

congregation. They could be back at the main church before the main church services were over. All the worker’s other fellowship activities could be the same. Life disruption would be minimized. That was considered important to prevent burnout and therefore allow for the long-term success of the Satellite Services.

2. The lessons would be short and non-controversial. The shortness was due to the attention span of some of the residents of the homes. The non-controversial was to allow any resident to come and not be offended by any teaching directly against their religious background. Positive scriptural teachings were allowed without criticizing the negatives of various denominations. If the Bible says it, it could be said. (In depth Bible studies are allowed at the resident’s request)
3. No collection was to be taken from the residents. On occasion, some monies are given directly to a worker. The worker then places it in the collection at the main congregation at the next service.
4. The same lesson was to be presented by the speaker at the morning and evening service.
5. A rotation of workers was established to involve several members, without burning out any of the members.
6. 8.5” x 11” large print “song books” were printed having only traditional songs that most of the residents would know.

Some benefits of this program have been:

1. Several baptisms have taken place, mostly conquest baptisms (baptism of residents who were not a member of a family already attending the Church of Christ) Due to the ambulatory nature of some of the residents, some of the baptisms have taken place in a member's swimming pool (with family approval).
2. The work has been greatly appreciated by the residents.
3. The work has been fulfilling to the workers.
4. The work has been an effective training ground for many brothers and sisters, including teenagers, young men and women, and some not so young. Several men who would not have considered delivering lessons in a large congregation have delivered lessons at the Satellite Services.
5. Several sisters have found fulfillment in the supporting roles in preparing for the services and assisting the residents.

The years this program has lasted, the number of residents served and in some cases converted, and the maturing of numerous members in taking a lead in providing these services are a testimony to the value of this type program.

It is very likely that almost every congregation in the country has a nearby nursing home which would be benefited by this involvement of your members.

Reece and Mattie have gone on to meet their maker, along with a lot of other residents which have been served in the past 40 years. Reece and Mattie appreciated our assistance as many in your area will appreciate your assistance.