

The Coming Crisis in Teaching

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The recently released Rand report, *Beyond the Commission Reports: The Coming Crisis in Teaching*, begins with the above want ad, describing the typical secondary school teaching assignment in the U.S. This report may be more significant than the plethora of commission reports that swept the country in 1983 and 1984 calling for higher standards and reforms to improve the quality of education. The Rand Report indicates that a different crisis has emerged that may preclude imple-

mentation of any of the reforms recommended by the national commissions and state task forces. That crisis results from an insufficient supply of quality, highly trained teachers.

The report presents some very startling data about the teaching profession:

1. A nationwide shortage of qualified teachers exists in many fields, not just in widely publicized areas of math and science.

2. The prospective talent pool is diminishing.

3. Salaries are lower than in other professions requiring similar preparation.

In addition, the report points out that in the decade between 1972 and 1982 progressively fewer dollars were spent on education. Public elementary and secondary education expenditures dropped from 5.5 percent of personal income to 4.6 percent.

Unless corrective measures are taken, the U.S. will soon face severe shortages of qualified teach-

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ers in virtually every subject area. If we are really serious about improving the quality of education, we need to do more to attract and retain qualified people. The quest for excellence will not be realized unless there are excellent teachers to make it happen.

Many ways of inducing young people to enter teaching should be explored. The church could offer grants and scholarships to promising college students and make special efforts to recruit Adventists who are now teaching in public institutions.

In addition, teachers' wage scales should be re-evaluated. Consideration could be given to setting up a program of awards or special recognitions for excellence in teaching.

Finally, as teachers, each of us must feel a personal sense of concern about this new crisis. What can we do? We can help by recruiting outstanding secondary school graduates into the profession, seizing every opportunity to talk to young people about the rewards of teaching. If we wish to restore "confidence through accomplishment," we must stand up and be counted as educators who are willing to promote the profession. We will thereby help guarantee excellence, both now and in years to come. □

Parts of this article are based on an editorial by Ron Joekel, President-Elect of Phi Delta Kappa International, which appeared in the Phi Delta Kappa newsletter (George Washington University chapter), November/December, 1984, pages 1 and 2.

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