

DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTRY 1995-2000 REPORT

Significant recent developments in Adventist education in the South Pacific Division (SPD) include a renewed emphasis on ministry and mission. The establishment of the SPD Curriculum Unit in 1988 by then-SPD Education Director Gerald Clifford was a watershed event. The value of that visionary decision has become increasingly evident as church educators and the wider constituency have come to better understand the integration of faith and learning. Although we recognize that curriculum development is a process, not a product or a single document, our new primary curriculum is close to being implemented. This curriculum emphasizes the faith development of the children entrusted to the teacher-ministers of the church.

At the secondary level, we have developed subject frameworks that show how distinctive Adventist values can be taught effectively and winsomely. A new secondary Bible curriculum is also close to completion. Perhaps the finest compliment for the SPD Curriculum Unit is its word-of-mouth reputation among the Christian schools of Australia and New Zealand. It is exciting to have non-Adventist teachers call and want to use our materials (intending to take out the sectarian bits, as they put it!), as that tells us our teachers find these materials valuable and must have told their Christian colleagues about them!

We also appreciate the financial support of the General Conference Department of Education, which helped fund the SPD Curriculum Unit. In return, the General Conference has been granted copyright access to the SPD-generated materials. Samples have been provided to all of the world divisions, and five are using, or planning to use, these materials. In addition, each of the church's nearly 100 colleges and universities was given a copy of the secondary frameworks after the General Conference Education Department had them translated into French, Portuguese, and Spanish.

By mid-2000, the frameworks will have

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An industrial arts class.

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been completely revised and reissued. When the SPD Curriculum Unit was established, the division education department also contracted with the La Sierra University School of Education in Riverside, California, to provide an extension campus program for our primary and secondary teachers. Teachers attend four LSU-taught summer schools at Avondale College, with the final and fifth summer taken at the La Sierra campus. Nearly 100 educators have so far earned master's degrees through this program. Avondale College (AC) has also provided an upgrading program, with 70 teachers now graduating with Bachelor of Education degrees. In addition, AC has begun offering its own master's degrees in both education and theology. This program will replace the one sponsored so successfully by La Sierra University.

We anticipate that teacher upgrading and regular in-servicing will help develop a pro-innovation mindset among educators. A number of schools have established technology demonstration classrooms, and some small schools have made an asset of their small enrollments. Ironbark, for example, has its own petting zoo and barn, which is admired in its community and beyond.

In-Service and Workshops

Another benefit of the recent teacher upgrading is a new source of leaders for in-service activities and teacher workshops. This has been particularly successful at the primary level. These full-time practicing teachers have a special credibility with their peers. Between terms, Australian and New Zealand teachers, particularly at the secondary level, are also traveling regularly to schools in Melanesia and Polynesia to conduct in-service activities for their peers. National teachers in Melanesia and Polynesia are beginning to assist and, on occasion, lead out in their own professional growth activities.

Bruce Youlden has done much to give our school system in Australia a more secure financial footing. As a result, southeastern Australia school systems are experimenting with centralized accounting. We hope that this approach will soon be used through the entire country—not just for education, but for all types of church financial activity.

Accreditation and Performance Appraisals

Implemented originally in the Trans-Tasman Union Conference in 1984, our K-12 accreditation process has spread to the other four unions in the SPD, and now only one secondary school in Polynesia remains unaccredited. All of the nearly 100 K-12 schools in Australia and New Zealand are now accredited, and the union missions are working toward accrediting their primary schools. In the meantime, several key Australian schools are piloting a strategic planning process to keep each school's development viable in the eyes of its constituents.

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An Australian high school science class.

Over the past five years, annual performance reviews for union and division directors have become a regular and well-accepted event. These appraisals are based on each union's annually updated strategic plans. Over the next five years, we expect to extend the process to the conference directors and then to principals, heads of departments, and finally, classroom teachers. Time has shown that starting with the senior educators has provided a good model.

Not only has the SPD Curriculum Unit done much to promote the distinctiveness of Adventist education to the teachers, but it has also accomplished much in the area of professional growth. The Curriculum Unit has provided some limited support to our union missions, including, for the past two years, funding workshop presenters. With the proposed restructuring, we anticipate adding a division-level associate director whose primary responsibility will be to assist the union missions with regular teacher in-servicing.

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Higher Education

During the past five years, the national government of Papua New Guinea granted university status for Pacific Adventist College, now Pacific Adventist University (PAU). Midyear, this school will accept its first students into a new master's program in theology, to be followed by other grad-

An Australian Adventist school graduation.

uate programs.

In 1999, the two island junior colleges (Fulton and Sonoma) and the Atoifi Hospital and Sopas Hospital schools of nursing became the first members of a consortium of Adventist tertiary institutions across the Pacific Basin. Initially, the junior partners will operate validated programs on their campuses under the PAU umbrella, but in time, we hope this will translate into more formal affiliations, with PAU the senior partner in a tertiary system with several satellite campuses. As a first step, Fulton College is now offering the fourth and final year of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) degree, with the graduates receiving a PAU diploma.

Avondale College is also seeking university status from the government. It has greatly expanded its academic majors and minors and hopes to offer a more compre-

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have their place in the 21st century, the fastest kingdom growth comes through effective evangelistic use of church schools coupled with the intentional involvement of the laity in building relationships with prospective church members. And such evangelism is essentially free!

Thus, the big challenge for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Division over the next five years is to effectively harness the potential of this powerful evangelistic medium. ✎

A primary school music class.

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Outdoor education in Australia.

hensive curriculum that will attract additional students without requiring additional staff.

Many dedicated people have contributed to establishing Adventist education in the South Pacific as a soul-winning ministry—rather than simply a service. As a church, we need to recognize that in modern, secularized societies, the school has become the most important institution in the lives of most families. Thus, we are more likely to gain access to the unchurched through education than the more traditional means of evangelism. The Christian school movement in Australia has shown that, while traditional methods of evangelism still

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An Australian Adventist elementary student.

A pottery class.