

Looking at A.D. 2000

The evolution of America from a largely agrarian to an industrial society and lately to a services-oriented one, reminds us that Christian education must not only address character and technical concerns, but also their application to changed circumstances.

Recent demographic surveys reveal some interesting facts:

- Only 4 percent of homes in the U.S.A. are "traditional"—the father works, the mother stays home, and there are two children.

- In 61 percent of families with children, both parents work.

- More than 70 percent of women born between 1946 and the mid-1950s work, and in the next decade this proportion should rise to 80 percent.

- In the future, as many as one-third of all women may not have any children at all.

- Between 1982 and 1984 the service-producing sector of the U.S. economy gained nearly 5 million jobs, while manufacturing employment was down by 1.2 million.

- Industrial robots could displace 100,000 to 200,000 jobs by the 1990s. The manufacture, operation, maintenance, and sales of robots will create 32,000 to 60,000 jobs.

- Increasing use of microprocessors and microcomputers (about 2 million desktop computers are in use in the United States), along with lasers, satellite communications equipment, data-handling and information systems have dramatically changed the workplace.

- In 1935, the United States had

6.8 million farms; by 1984, this figure had dropped to 2.2 million.

Given these trends, if Adventist schools are to prepare our youth for successful living and a sensitive Christian witness, the focus of training and preparation must factor in new realities.

We are not suggesting a change in our traditional values or ideals. We are proposing that parents, church leaders, and educators must prayerfully study new approaches and develop methods to capture the interest of persons who will become pioneers and adventurers for Christ in new situations.

This issue, devoted to the place of technologies in the SDA curriculum, is a reminder that vocational pursuits have moved from the lithopress to laser discs; from hand plow to motorized combines; from X-ray technology to ultrasound radiography; from scriptography to computographics.

While the whole world is not at this stage of evolution, we must remind ourselves that it is not a

case of "either, or" but of "both, and." For if the progress of civilization teaches anything, it is that with the powerful communicative tools at their disposal people will soon make of our world a global village. In Papua New Guinea I recently saw people very close to their animist traditions wearing the latest Western clothing and T-shirts with contemporary slogans, carrying portable stereo cassette players. I have seen similar examples in such distant places as Southern Africa and the hinterlands of South American countries. This surely suggests that the "have-nots" feel keenly their current situations and desire to acquire products and technologies that represent sharing in the "good life."

The world of the twenty-first century, if the Lord tarries, will be one where technology will predominate. We as SDAs must be prepared to make life in Christ real to that society because of our skillful and artful presentation of truth through technology.—V.S.G. □