

The Blessings of Math

The *blessings* of math? I can imagine you scratching your head. Don't I mean the usefulness or importance of math? Or perhaps its vital role in training an educated populace and competent employees? No, though these are all important and deserve consideration.

Taught within a Christian worldview, mathematics not only contributes to literacy and prepares students to take their place in the high-tech world of the 21st century, but it also helps them more fully understand God and the orderly universe He designed.

When well taught, mathematics offers many blessings for the developing Christian—and for his or her teachers, parents, community, and church family. Here are just a few:

- Discovering and exploring new ideas and creative solutions to problems.
- Using critical thinking skills to analyze situations and gain a more complete understanding of life and truth by applying the biblical adage, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21, KJV).
- Understanding and appreciating the Bible's use of numbers and our Adventist pioneers' use of mathematics to calculate the periods of biblical prophecy (see articles in this issue by Hans-Joachim Vollrath and Wil Clarke).
- Learning persistence while assessing problem-solving strategies and inventively adapting them as needed through planning, reflecting, and communicating effectively to others.
- Working cooperatively to formulate and explore problems and to identify and assess solutions, while learning to listen respectfully to the ideas of others.
- Applying mathematics in a variety of situations and contexts to analyze and understand societal issues and seek creative solutions.
- Understanding statistics and probability and becoming alert to manipulation of public opinion through their misuse.
- Appreciating the contributions of mathematicians who were devout Christians.
- Discerning spiritual truth in mathematical principles, relationships, and processes.
- Better comprehending the character of God through a study of numerical and geometric patterns in nature.
- Gaining a better grasp of the concepts of infinity and eternity.
- Achieving a clearer understanding of the true meaning and value of Christian stewardship (see Bob Moore's article).
- Gaining a clearer understanding of economics, mortgage and credit-card interest, debt, investing, insurance, and the risks of gambling.
- Learning to use a variety of electronic media to explore mathematical problems and prepare for rewarding and productive careers.
- Strengthening family ties as students and their families work together to solve problems (see Janet Mallory's article on Math Teams).

- Understanding and evaluating the arguments about the implementation of the new math standards in classroom instruction (see articles by Kenneth L. Shaw, et al; and by Ted Hodgson and Jim Ballard).

How can we achieve these blessings? By having a well-trained faculty who model Christian virtues and discuss the spiritual applications of mathematics (see John Wesley Taylor's article), offering opportunities for dialogue among educators about the integration of faith and learning in mathematics, as well as about effective teaching strategies, and encouraging all students to enroll in mathematics classes.

I encourage you to explore the articles in this issue. You will find many ideas for making math a blessing to you and your students!—B.J.R.

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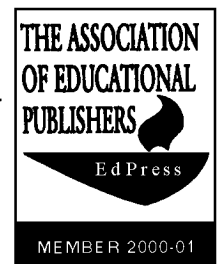
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