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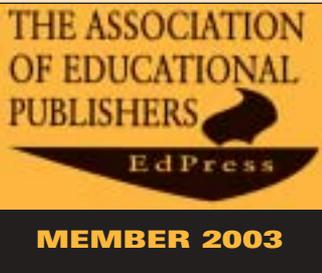
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**C. GARLAND DULAN**



## Future Directions in Higher Education

**T**he staff of the General Conference Department of Education (GCDOE) serves the Seventh-day Adventist Church by providing consulting services to the church's schools, colleges, and universities worldwide. In collaboration with the education directors of each division, the GCDOE has concentrated on strengthening educational programs at the tertiary level.

Currently, the Adventist Church's education system includes more than 5,000 primary schools, some 1,200 secondary schools, 103 colleges and universities, 37 worker-training schools, and more than 58,000 teachers instructing almost 1.2 million students. The unprecedented growth during the past decade from about 50 tertiary institutions to more than 100 has raised several challenges—maintaining focus on the mission, goals, and objectives of the church, securing qualified and committed teachers, and ensuring that students learn the essential concepts and skills to function successfully in today's world. Most important is the need to ensure that students have an opportunity to become better acquainted with God and to make a decision regarding their future destiny. Without this focus, there would be no point in the Adventist Church operating such an expensive educational system.

The growth of our schools brings with it new opportunities for mission, since the largest area of growth comes from the enrolling of non-Adventists. In 2001, of the 120,000 new students entering the system, more than 60 percent were non-Adventists. We must ensure that the environment maintained by our schools is overtly Christian and Seventh-day Adventist. For this reason, over the past several years, the GCDOE has placed greater emphasis on the development of spiritual master plans and on the integration of faith and learning.

In the future, the GCDOE will emphasize (1) strengthening the faith and learning components of our system; (2) assessing how well the mission, goals, and objectives of our institutions are accomplished; and (3) ensuring that the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is being fostered through our schools' educational programs.

Through collaboration, we will seek to involve a larger audience in the consultative framework in which the GCDOE operates. We plan to become better informed and thus more capable of processing information and providing service. Though our major emphasis will continue to be higher education (unions and conferences focus on secondary and elementary education), we will seek, as best we can, to become a resource for other educational levels as well. We are, after all, one Adventist educational system, not two or three.

The GCDOE plans to continue its two current publications: the *Journal of Adventist Education* and *Dialogue*, and to expand the Adventist Professionals Network (APN) whose database already contains information on more than 3,500 Adventists with academic degrees and specialties of interest to Adventist employers. We will continue our international conferences for tertiary administrators. Undoubtedly, some new initiatives will grow out of recommendations and actions by the Commission on Higher Education, whose report is due in October 2003.

In the near future, a number of changes will be taking place: Some internal processes of the GCDOE will need revision, along with accreditation guidelines; new linkages will need to be developed with other church entities; and we will need to devise more effective methods of information sharing. These adjustments will enable the GCDOE to be more useful and user friendly to the church in strengthening our education system and furthering God's kingdom. We enlist your support in accomplishing these goals and welcome your suggestions. ☞

*On January 1, 2003, C. Garland Dulan became the World Director of Education for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He previously served as an Associate Director of Education at the church's world headquarters and as Provost at La Sierra University in Riverside, California.*