



Rigorous and Relevant Learning for the 21st Century

BY TOM NKUNGULA

In the 21st century, Adventist educational leaders in the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID) are asking the following questions:

1. What is the real purpose of

Seventh-day Adventist education in this division?

2. What kind of church members do we want our children to grow up to be?

3. How can we design Adventist schools so that students will acquire the skills they need to live productive lives?

These are just a few questions that are being discussed in offices and meetings. Based on surveys and an education summit, we have developed the following goals for Seventh-day Adventist education in SID:

1. Our Students Will Develop a Life of Faith and Commitment

Through encouragement, prayer, and study of God's Word, students will develop a faith commitment and a respect for the dignity of all human beings. To promote this, the formal Bible curriculum will be used at all levels, and religion classes will be taught by qualified, committed Adventist teachers.

Further, in consultation with the General Conference Education Department, the SID Education Department will organize Bible textbook-writing workshops.

2. Our Students Will Acquire Basic Skills

When students leave our schools, regardless of the level at which they exit,



Students at Maranatha High School, Taung, Northern Cape, South Africa.



Beit Hall, a newly added facility at Solusi University in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, has a seating capacity of 3,000 people.

they must have acquired basic skills to survive and succeed in the world of work. There must be no gaps between what we teach and what is actually required in the real world.

As a result, SID schools will integrate into the curriculum practical skills like computer technology, building and masonry, agriculture (poultry, soil, and crop science, horticulture, etc.), architecture, graphic design, and auto technology.

3. Our Schools Will Employ High-Quality Teachers

To provide a wholistic education, our schools must have qualified and dedicated teachers who are adequately up-

graded in their specialties. The teachers' attitudes and skills have a huge effect on the students' everyday experiences and success.

When the teachers are adequately prepared and believe in the philosophy and mission of the school, they are excited about their jobs and see their role as not only developing skills, but also as modeling a Christian worldview. Their enthusiasm motivates the students to accomplish great things in life.

4. We Will Upgrade and Modernize the School Buildings and Environment

We are committed to ensuring that every student fulfills his or her potential.

We thus seek to develop school structures and relationships (environment) that nurture the strengths and energies of each student. Effective schools start with the student, not the curriculum.

To achieve these goals, we are investigating innovations that will produce school improvement—building new, modern structures with up-to-date equipment, upgrading existing buildings, and seeking to ensure the quality and relevance of Adventist education.

5. We Will Teach the Three R's and More

Although reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic are still important in the 21st century, they are not enough to counter the challenges our students will face when they join the world market. Without commitment, a rigorous curriculum, and relevant learning, they will find it extremely difficult to succeed in life.

In the 21st century, learning has to be rigorous and relevant. Students must experience intense concentration in any activity that requires skill, relevance, and discipline, regardless of its content.

Future Plans

The SID Education Department is implementing preferred Seventh-day Adventist school practices, integrating into all aspects of the system the following Focus Issues:

1. Opening new schools, with these goals:
 - a. Each local church district is to establish at least one primary school by the end of 2005.
 - b. Each conference/mission/associa-



Students at Mundondo Secondary School in Zimbabwe.



Teachers and administrators in front of the administration building at Mundondo Secondary School.



Students enjoy singing at Fairview Adventist School in Zimbabwe.



Students at Solusi High School in Zimbabwe learn practical skills in the woodworking class.



Solusi University was established to help its students attain spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional growth. Here, students take their vows before being baptized.

tion is to establish at least one secondary school by the end of 2005.

c. The division is to build and operate a special school for the international personnel serving in its territory.

2. Using 50 percent of the division bursary funds to train teachers for the new schools, and to encourage unions and conferences to embark on similar programs for the teachers in their new schools.

3. Requiring all teachers who were not trained in Adventist colleges to complete an in-service course in the Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Christian Education.



Nyahuni High School in Zimbabwe, which opened in 1985, offers classes up to A-Level.



Teachers and administrators in front of the administration building at Northwood Primary School in Zimbabwe.

4. Developing a strong marketing program to inform church members about the value and importance of Christian education as outlined in Spirit of Prophecy books such as *Education* and *Fundamentals of Christian Education*.

5. Ensuring that every school follows an Adventist curriculum that integrates faith and learning.

6. Recommending that all denominational employees, wherever possible, send their children to Adventist schools.

7. Recommending that denominational employees be urged to support Christian education by donating at least two percent of their monthly salary to this worthy cause.



Sports and play equipment at Presada Primary School in South Africa.



Students provide input to the evaluation team visiting Nyazara Adventist High School in Zimbabwe.



Students using the Ralph Watts Library at Solusi University.



Students praying at West Rand Adventist School in Zimbabwe.



Graduation at Solusi University.

8. Encouraging all church members in the division, including those in baptismal classes, to contribute money to Christian education.

9. Recommending that appropriations to denominational schools be based on how well they adhere to the philosophy of Adventist education, such as the percentage of Seventh-day Adventist students in these schools.

10. Requiring that each school appoint a chaplain to care for the spiritual needs of the students. ✎



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Ladies' hostel accommodations, Solusi University.