



Quality and Growth

BY CHIEMELA IKONNE

The West-Central Africa Division (WAD) was organized in 2002 from the former Africa-Indian Ocean Division. The educational emphasis in WAD this quinquennium has been on quality and growth. This theme has been promoted in various ways, including the following:

Leadership Conferences for Education and Church Leaders

Forty-one division and union officers as well as personnel from the General Conference Education Department participated in a 2002 inter-division education leadership conference in Nairobi, Kenya. The conference equipped participants to promote and support quality schools and to encourage growth in Adventist education. Since then, each

union, in collaboration with the division, has held a similar conference for its educators at the conference and mission levels.

Integration of Faith and Learning (IFL) Seminars

We have largely accomplished our goal of having all of our educators participate in an IFL seminar at least once every two years. The IFL theme is "Teaching With Authority." Seminar topics have included Adventist education philosophy; effective teaching practices; discipline; and HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention, and care for infected persons.

Publication of the *Adventist Educator*

This free biannual departmental

journal provides an opportunity for our educators to share their IFL knowledge and experiences with their colleagues. It is distributed to all university educators, as well as primary and secondary schools in the division.

Continuing Education

The division Department of Education provided scholarship monies that enabled the universities to send personnel for advanced degrees. Likewise, a division-coordinated Home Study International (HSI) program has helped many adult church workers and members to obtain a high school diploma and enroll in postsecondary training.

Learning Resource Materials

Quality education requires appropriate and adequate learning materials. To this end, the division obtained encyclopedias, Bible commentaries, and science and art books for many secondary schools to enhance their library holdings.

Evaluation of the Institutions

Besides the regular Adventist Accrediting Association visits, the division collaborates with the universities for internal self-evaluation, and the union and conference directors do likewise for the secondary and primary schools, respectively.

General Promotion of Education

Because education is central to every form of development, Adventist schools are promoted at every opportunity. We



Gambian Union educators' conference in 2003.

have produced a “Total Commitment” education T-shirt, and education Sabbaths are joyfully celebrated throughout the division.

In 2002, the Adventist Educators Association of Nigeria (ADEASON) was formed. This organization brings together Adventist educators who teach at the secondary and tertiary levels, within and outside the church, for the promotion, support, and advancement of Adventist education.

Evangelism and Baptisms

Our teachers and students distributed more than 1.5 million pieces of literature for the Sow One Billion program. Their active involvement in evangelism has led to more than 11,000 baptisms. Our three universities (Babcock, Valley View, and Cosendai) have baptized more than 1,500 persons, most of whom were students. Our primary and secondary schools have baptized more than 9,400.

Quality Education

A clear evidence of the quality of Adventist education in WAD is the high demand for it. Across the division, parents and guardians have great respect for the wholistic quality of our schools. And they are proud to be associated with them. This explains why Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo visited and worshiped at Babcock University on Sabbath, October 26, 2002—an event rarely seen in Nigeria. Likewise, Alhaji Aliu Mahama, vice president of the Republic of Ghana, was the commencement speaker during graduation exercises at Valley View University on September 28, 2003.

A unique feature of WAD universi-



Students work in a modern, well-equipped science laboratory at Babcock University in Nigeria.

ties is their provision of bursaries (scholarships) to all Adventist students. This ranges from a 50 percent discount for theology students to 30 percent for students in other fields of study.

Babcock University (BU)

Babcock University ranked first among the first three private universities that received their charters from the Federal Government of Nigeria in April 1999. It has rapidly grown from 753 students in 1999 to 3,531 in 2004. The university currently offers three areas of study: education and humanities, management and social sciences, and science and technology, with a total of 25 programs. Its facilities include a modern, well-equipped laboratory complex, central cafeteria, modern guest house, and V-SAT-operated Internet facilities.

BU's quality education has been recognized in various ways by different organizations: (1) The BU Students' Parents Consultative Forum has donated more than U.S.\$1.5 million for the construction of water, health, and sports fa-

cilities; (2) in 2002, the Nigeria National Universities Commission (NUC) gave an award to BU Vice Chancellor Adekunle A. Alalade for the delivery of quality education in Nigeria and appointed him the admissions panel chair for the 2002-2003 academic session; (3) BU received high recognition in the Nigerian University Systems' annual review of 2003; (4) Godwin N. D. Aja of BU's Health Sciences Department was elected as a representative for Africa on the Governing Council of the Cochrane Collaboration Consumer Network Incorporated, in Melbourne, Australia; (5) the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) granted full accreditation to BU's accounting program; and (6) at least two state governors visit BU each year.

Valley View University (VU)

In 1998, Valley View University became the first private university accredited by the Ghana National Accreditation Board. Student enrollment has risen from about 200 at that time to 900 in 2004. Degrees offered include accounting, computer science, theology, and religious studies. Degree programs in banking and finance, marketing, human resources management, and education are scheduled to begin in 2005-2006.

VVU is the only university in Africa, and one of the very few in the world, to use ecological sanitary technology. The urinals utilize a “dry cleaning” method that saves water and produces fertilizer for crops and methane gas for cooking.



An Adventist Accrediting Association team visits Babcock University.



Students and teachers from the new Adventist secondary school in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.

Higher Education to offer degrees in theology, church management, computer maintenance and software engineering, information management, accounting and finance, and business administration.

Although student enrollment has remained modest (about 200), AUC's impact is felt nationally as well as

locally. In 2004, the faculty of business and computer science placed second in the national universities competition. The active involvement of AUC family in nearby churches has yielded more than 600 baptisms this quinquennium.

Primary and Secondary Schools

At the beginning of this quinquennium, Adventist education was operating in only 11 of the 18 countries in WAD. Now, three more (Gabon, Mali, and Togo) have opened church schools. A volunteer group of Adventist youth from France constructed much of the primary school building in Libreville, Gabon, in 2003. In 2002, the same organization did major renovations at the Adventist secondary school in Kribi, Cameroon. In 2004, Outpost Centers International constructed a six-classroom building in Chad.

The number of primary schools in WAD has increased dramatically, especially in Ghana and Nigeria. There were 704 church primary schools in Ghana in 2004, compared with 401 in 2000 (a 76 percent increase). Nigeria started this quinquennium with 49 primary schools, but now has 70 (a 42 percent increase).

Among the events of special note was the establishment in 2003 of a new sec-

ondary school in Abidjan (the commercial capital of Ivory Coast), even as civil war threatened social stability. Two other secondary schools were established in major WAD cities during this quinquennium: in Yaoundé, Cameroon; and N'Djamena, Chad.

Many WAD secondary and vocational schools have distinguished themselves as centers of excellence. The Nigerian Ministry of Education ranks Owerri Adventist Secondary Technical College (ASTEC) among the best in the nation, and its students and teachers have represented the state at national science and technology competitions.

In Cameroon, Yaoundé Adventist Secondary School (CAY) is spearheading computer education in secondary schools in the nation. Its computer courses and well-equipped laboratory are attracting the children of the upper class. CAY has such a good reputation that some public notables contact top church leaders in order to secure admission for their children.

Conclusion

As we reflect on the educational activities and events of the past five years, all we can say is: "Surely God has led." To Him alone we give the glory and honor. Certainly, He has used church and educational leaders to promote and support the work of education. And of no less importance are the faithful educators, students, parents, and the entire division membership. We say "Thank you" to all.

As we look to the future, we plan to improve on what we have been able to do thus far by the grace of God. ✍



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Students at Valley View University in Ghana performing community service.

The Ghanaian government has commended the efforts of VVU by giving it a special status, which allows it to award its own degrees without being affiliated to a state school, as is required of other private institutions.

Adventist University Cosendai (AUC)

Established in 1996, Adventist University Cosendai has received authorization from the Cameroon Ministry of

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