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Learning History's Lessons



A pundit has written that “The only thing we learn from history is that we don’t learn anything from history.” George Santayana warned that “Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”

For Adventists, thinking about the lessons of history brings to mind Ellen White’s well-known and more optimistic statement that “We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history” (*Selected Messages*, Book 3, p. 162).

This larger-than-usual issue of the JOURNAL was prepared in the hope that examining some aspects of the history of our educational system can stimulate discussion and thought that will prevent us from repeating some mistakes and set a course that will honor God and serve our students and the church more effectively.

George Knight looks at the challenge of balancing academics and mission that has always existed in Adventist education. Surprisingly, he sees this tension as absolutely necessary to keep our schools from succumbing to either of two extremes: the “dying-of-the-light” syndrome or a less-than-adequate Bible college-type program.

Historian Floyd Greenleaf explores “Who’s in Charge?” of Adventist colleges, a controversial question raised 110 years ago at Battle Creek College that is still relevant today. You may be surprised at his conclusions!

In two stimulating articles, Richard Rice explores “How Adventist Should We Be? And How Should We Be Adventist?” and Tom Goodwin describes how to leverage the tension between faith and knowledge in order to advance Christian education. Though many of his illustrations are science-related, his recommendations can be used in many disciplines.

C. Garland Dulan and Lisa Beardsley look at how to grow Adventist schools in a responsible way and how the work of church accreditation helps ensure academic quality and faithfulness to mission.

And finally, Grant Leitma and Julian Melgosa offer some insights about teaching an Adventist philosophy of psychology, and Lauren Matacio and Bruce Closser provide practical advice on how to help students use the Internet responsibly.

You may have noticed the multiple occurrences of the words *mission* and *tension* in the themes of this issue. As the Adventist educational system continues to grow and develop worldwide, constant vigilance is necessary to ensure that our schools are both academically strong and truly Adventist. Examining our history, and the way the Lord has led us, will provide inspiration, courage, and guidance for the future.

I hope that you will read each of these articles and discuss them with your colleagues—and maybe write a letter to the editor with your reactions (you can do that online now at our Website: <http://education.gc.adventist.org/jae>).—B.J.R.