

SSD

Reality Today— Vision Tomorrow

BY MIKE LEKIC AND LAWRENCE DOMINGO

The Seventh-day Adventist school system in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) continues to exist and grow with the goal of providing an education that will prepare its students “for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come” (Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 13). As we review the progress of Adventist education in SSD during the past five years and consider plans for the future, it is clear that: (1) only through the grace of God were we able to accomplish what we did, and (2) there are greater things to be achieved.

Reality Today— Accomplishments and Challenges

The SSD Education Department experienced a change in leadership during this quinquennium—a new director in 2007, and an associate di-

rector in 2008. Many of the division-level programs continue to function well; some recent initiatives have been added to meet current needs.

Statistical Update. In 2009, SSD had a total of 997 schools, 120,664 students, and 7,004 teachers. This represents a slight decrease in

schools and an increase in enrollment and teachers compared to the previous quinquennium. The church has education programs in all but three of the 18 countries that make up the SSD territory.*

Evangelistic In-reach and Outreach.

Each year, SSD’s education in-reach programs result in more than 4,000 people being baptized. In addition, all schools are also actively involved in outreach programs in the communities nearby and more distant from their campuses. The division department of education has provided matching funds to each college/university and union office of education to develop and implement a plan for the school-based evangelism outreach “Tell the World.” Our tertiary and secondary schools as well as division, union, and conference/mission education leaders all hold yearly evangelistic meetings. These and other initiatives add thousands of baptisms each year.

Reaching the Unreached Places through Education (RUPE) program of West Visayan Academy in central Philippines, sponsored by the General Conference Council on Evangelism and Witness, seeks to establish an Adventist presence in population sectors with no church members by offering free education to qualified young people whom they seek to win to

Christ during their study at the academy and who can return home to share their faith with family and friends.

Bursary, Education Aid, and Nelson Scholarships. The SSD has provided scholarship funds of more than U.S.\$300,000 each year for



Baptism at Lipa Adventist Academy, Philippines.



Adventist University of the Philippines receives an award as one of the country's best universities.

upgrading college and university faculty, as well as K-12 teachers. An average of 190 personnel were upgraded each year during the past quinquennium thanks to the SSD bursary and education aid funds. More than 170 students from SSD colleges and universities received the Nelson Scholarship Endowment Fund.

DayStar Readers and Bible Curriculum. A new reading series for grades 1-6 is now being used in SSD classrooms. Teacher's guides are being completed, and we will soon begin revising our Bible curriculum based on the North American Division's Bible program.

Graduate Education Expansion and Quality. The Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS), a General Conference institution has offered Master's and doctoral degrees in the SSD territory for more than 20 years. The Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP) has for some time offered Master's programs, but more recently has been authorized by the church's International Board of Education to offer several doctoral degrees and has received a national award from the president of the Philippines as one of the best universities in the country.

Other SSD tertiary institutions offering graduate degrees include Adventist University of Indonesia, Klabat University, also in Indonesia, and Asia-Pacific International University (formerly Mission College) in



SSD students of the first Adventist school in East Timor.

Thailand, the SSD's newest university, Mountain View College, Central Philippine Adventist College, and Northern Luzon Adventist College, all in the Philippines, are actively seeking university status.

Strengthening School Administrative and Teacher Functions. The SSD Education Code is being revised and

will include new policies governing teacher certification, core curricula for the training of teachers and ministers, teacher performance standards and evaluation, and quality assurance. The code will soon be posted on the SSD education Website (<http://www.ssd.org/edu>), which has recently been revised to feature education news/events and the exchange of ideas and experiences.

In 2009, the division coordinated an International Seminar on the Integration of Faith, Values, Teaching, and Learning on the beautiful campus of AIU. Twenty-seven participants representing 22 educational institutions attended the event.

Adventist Accrediting Association team-member and school board-member training have been offered in the past several years. Teachers' conventions were held in most of the division territories with the SSD office of education personnel being major contributors.

Also, two workshops for tertiary- and secondary-level dormitory deans were organized and sponsored.

Challenges. Despite renewed efforts to strengthen school libraries by providing training for librarians, building book collections with donated books and reference materials, and providing incentives, the challenge of upgrading libraries in many of our schools

remains. The availability of textbooks from preschool through graduate level continues to be a major concern. In addition, many of the schools are unable to implement the voted wage scale due to financial challenges.

**Vision Tomorrow—
Future Opportunities**

Proverbs 29:18 reads, “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (KJV). Unless we understand clearly where we are headed, the probability of a successful journey is severely limited. Also, vision without action is merely a dream. Our plans for a better tomorrow in SSD education include the following.

Strategic Planning. College and university presidents as well as union education directors have agreed to finalize, before the SSD Education Advisory in 2011, the strategic planning process that began in 2008. Areas of emphasis include: (1) spiritual/moral focus, (2) administration, (3) marketing and enrollment, (4) curriculum and instruction, (5) school facilities, (6) finances and development, and (7) ongoing evaluation and revision. As part of this process, we held a bi-union tertiary education consultation and planning meeting in Indonesia in



Master's degree graduate with Princess Soamsowalee at Asia-Pacific International University.

Division-Wide Teachers' Convention in 2013. The SSD Education Committee voted to organize an SSD-wide teachers' convention in September 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Review and Approve New Undergraduate Programs and Professional Institutions. The

terms of reference of our education board/committee have been revised in order to be able to review and grant approvals for new college programs and professional educational institutions upon demonstration of eligibility.

Building a Quality Educational Culture. A Quality Assurance Ad Hoc Committee under the leadership of the SSD director of education has been established to formulate quality criteria and standards that will help establish a culture of quality in SSD schools.

As we begin a new quinquennium, we remember the Apostle Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 3:6, “I

planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow” (NIV). May God bless as we continue improving the church's education ministry to our children and youth and to the surrounding communities until that day when we will be invited to live eternally together with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ☺



Science students in the lab at Asia-Pacific International University.

August 2009. Similar events are planned for the Philippines and elsewhere in 2010. These meetings review the academic programs each institution, as well as what they plan to offer, leading to an agreement on how to collaborate to meet the needs of the church and each school's surrounding community.



Mike Lekic is Director of Education for the Southern Asia-Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists (SSD) in Silang, Cavite, Philippines;



Lawrence Domingo is Associate Director of Education for SSD.

*The SSD has education programs in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar/Burma, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste/East Timor, and the U.S. territories of Guam and Wake Island, the Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Northern Mariana Islands and Palau; but not in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Vietnam, or Brunei Darussalam.