P opulations around the world are now predominantly ur- 
ban, as migration into metropol- 
itan areas continues to rise 


dramatically. Up to 54 percent of all human beings, or nearly four billion 
people, now live in cities—a figure that is projected to increase 1.84 per-
cent per year between 2015 and 2020.1 This population shift creates unique 
and perplexing challenges for im-


proving lives and communities in 

city life. The Seventh-day 


Adventist Church’s response to God’s call of “mission to 


cities” is to give top priority for whole-


istic ministry in the 


world’s large urban centers.6 Adventist education, 


along with the church’s health ministries, must be central 
to that effort; and to that end, must adjust to meet the 


challenging pressures and dynamics of urban life that mit-


igate against educational success. While this will demand 


differences to our perspectives on and processes of education, 


such change must not lead to a deconstruction of our 


identity. Our approach to education must adjust to meet 


the full range of needs that exist in urban centers while 


still modeling Adventist beliefs, values, and standards. 


This special theme issue of the JOURNAL is dedicated to 


couraging awareness of education as central to the 


Adventist Church’s mission in urban settings, and inspir-


ing action from stakeholders to help 


achieve this goal. The article by Sim-


mons introduces the topic and pro-


vides a context for the issue. The ar-


ticle by Lea summarizes the ideas and 


issues a call for action. The following 


areas are also addressed: 


• School success factors for urban set-


tings: Ensuring that all children receive 


an adequate education is paramount 


to the future of any country, society, 


or community—including the church. 


• Partnerships between parents, schools, churches, and 


communities: Too often, schools and teachers are inade-


quately prepared to deal with the social, political, and 


economic conditions that affect the lives of urban stu-


dents, families, and communities. Collaboration among 


key stakeholders for school reform is imperative to en-


sure the success of urban schools. Change is always diffi-


cult and largely dependent upon the success of critical 


community alliances. Partnerships between parents, 


schools, churches, and communities will be addressed in 


the article by Cummings and Cummings. 


• Spiritual principles for leadership: Studies show that 


educators can learn much from methods of spiritual de-


velopment, and that the spiritual perspective of educa-


tional leaders is crucial for shaping school ethos and di-


rection. Like schools in other settings, schools in urban 


locales need spiritual values and principles for education 


and life. Spiritual principles for leadership will be ad-


ressed in the article by Pollard. 


The articles selected for this issue address some of the 


critical points of discussion on this topic, and will en-


hance awareness and spark conversation; however, much 


more could be shared. This is just a start. Today, educa-


tion remains inaccessible for millions, worldwide. Socie-


tal inequality and marginalization are persistent across 


time and place for many groups. Many of the barriers 


that undermine educational access and outcomes relate 


to gender, social class, economic status, health, race, eth-


Continued on page 47
nicity, cultural identity, and religious discrimination in both developing and developed countries. We invite you to respond to the “Call for Papers” at the bottom of this page to report successes and lessons learned from initiatives that schools (pre-kindergarten through postgraduate) in your conference, union, or division have implemented in urban centers. Ultimately, our goal is to inspire action through education that takes seriously Adventism’s mission to the cities.

The authors of this guest editorial served as co-coordinators for this special issue on urban education and Adventist schools. Dr. Ella Smith Simmons serves as a General Vice President of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland. Dr. Davenia J. Lea serves as an Associate Director of Education for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland. The JAE editorial staff express heartfelt appreciation for the many hours Drs. Simmons and Lea devoted to selecting topics, obtaining peer reviewers, providing input on article content, as well as their prompt response to the editor’s questions during the planning and production of the issue.

Population growth among the world’s largest cities continues to expand, and with this expansion comes unique opportunities for Adventist education. The Mission to the Cities* initiative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has propelled the establishment of centers of influence, community events, seminars, and small group and evangelistic meetings. This special edition is designed to showcase how Adventist schools, from early childhood through postgraduate levels, are making an impact in urban classrooms and communities through school-based programs and research.

We invite papers that describe how schools and communities are working together to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of students through research, training, and service. Each paper should clearly delineate the purpose of the initiative, the process of implementation, as well as challenges and successes, provide data to support impact on the school and community (qualitative and/or quantitative), and recommendations for good practice. Ultimately, each paper should address how Adventist Christian elementary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions are successfully creating learning environments in under-resourced urban settings.

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**NOTES AND REFERENCES**

4. Nicole Fulgham, Schools in Crisis: They Need Your Help (Whether You Have Kids or Not), FRAMES Barna Group (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2013);
7. “Mission to the Cities” is the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s holistic approach to sharing the gospel among the growing populations the world’s large cities. Initiatives include the establishment of Life Hope Centers, neighborhood events, seminars, small groups, and evangelistic meetings. Inaugurated in 2012 with support from the worldwide church leadership, the initiative was launched in 2013 in New York City followed in 2014 with each of the church’s 13 world divisions focusing on at least one large city in its territory. For 2015, each union will focus on a city in its region: http://missiontothecities.org/. See also Ellen G. White’s Ministry to the Cities (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 2012).

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**CALL FOR PAPERS**

**The Journal of Adventist Education**

**Special Issue**

Guest Editors: Ella Smith Simmons and Davenia J. Lea

**Topic: Urban Education, Part II**

**Deadline for Submission: December 15, 2015**

To further explore ways that Adventist education is making an impact in urban centers in the 21st century, the special issue of the Journal will focus on the following topics:

- Professional development models, collaborative endeavors with church organizations and community partnerships;
- Workshops/conferences that train teachers and educational administrators;
- Outreach or mission programs (i.e., school-based domestic and international service-learning projects; “centers of influence, life, hope”);
- Curriculum and instruction resources designed to engage students and their families, and enhance the learning environment in under-resourced urban schools;
- Research specifically studying Adventist urban school populations.

The Journal of Adventist Education is the professional publication for Seventh-day Adventist teachers and educational administrators worldwide. Theoretical or practical articles submitted for publication should address topics of interest to that group. The English edition of the Journal is published five times yearly, with approximately eight articles appearing in each issue.

**Review Process**

**Format**

Articles, including references, charts, figures, and tables, generally should not exceed 10 pages. Papers should be double-spaced, using 12-point type, and standard margin and paragraph indentation. For additional information, visit http://jae.adventist.org/authors.htm#form.

Notification of receipt will take place upon submission; notification of acceptance will take place after the submission deadline. All papers will undergo double-blind peer review.

*To read more about the goals and accomplishments of the Mission to the Cities initiative, visit http://missiontothecities-org.lifehopecenters.org/.

http://jae.adventist.org