



Faith-Ann McGarrell

## E T E R N I T Y



## I N O U R S I G H T

This special issue of THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION® (JAE) is part of a long-standing tradition. Each quinquennium,<sup>1</sup> a special General Conference issue featuring education reports from each division of the Seventh-day Adventist world church is produced to inform, inspire, and engender general support for the work of Adventist education. Some 30 years ago, in the special issue for the 1990 General Conference session, Victor S. Griffiths, then editor, and Beverly J. Robinson-Rumble, JAE assistant editor and later editor, produced a publication that showcased and promoted the best of Adventist education, in keeping with the tradition. Education directors from the church's 10 divisions<sup>2</sup> shared stories of success, hope, and transformation, and described the unique challenges specific to each territory, along with plans for improvement.

In the editorial for that issue, the editor cited sobering enrollment statistics for Seventh-day Adventist schools worldwide and voiced concern about the number of Adventist students eligible to enroll in Adventist schools, but for various reasons, had not done so. Some of the reasons 30 years ago—the cost of attending Adventist schools, and the lack of quality instruction, access to the latest technology, and well-trained teachers—still echo in church and school board meetings, around the dinner table in Adventist homes, and classrooms and hallways on school campuses.

Thirty years ago, enrollment in Seventh-day Adventist K-12 schools stood at 692,395 students, of whom 353,121 (51 percent) identified as Seventh-day Adventists. According to church statistics for that period, this number represented only 11.27 percent of the 3,131,034 children identified as Seventh-day Adventists and eligible to enroll in Adventist schools.<sup>3</sup>

Today, the numbers tell a story of continuous growth amidst many challenges. According to the most recent statistics, enrollment in Adventist primary and secondary schools (K-12) stands at 1,855,688. Of this number, 685,727 (37 percent) identify as Seventh-day Adventists,<sup>4</sup> representing approximately one-third of the more than two million school-aged children counted as members in Adventist congregations worldwide who could be enrolled in Adventist schools.<sup>5</sup> These numbers do not include the additional 81,267 Adventist students enrolled in tertiary and worker-training programs, which brings the total number of students enrolled in Adventist schools, kindergarten through higher education, to 2,023,844 students. Of this number, a total of 766,994 (38 percent) identify as Seventh-day Adventists.<sup>6</sup>

At the beginning of the 2015-2020 quinquennium, the General Conference launched its strategic plan *Reach the World: Reach Up to God, Reach in With God, Reach Out With God*, which outlined objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) for each department and ministry of the world church. Charged with these objectives and

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KPIs, the General Conference Department of Education adopted as its theme for the 2015-2020 quinquennium “Educating for Eternity.” This theme headlined the Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) Conference held in Silver Spring, Maryland, October 2016, and launched the quinquennial focus for similar education conferences held in Rwanda, Slovenia, and the Dominican Republic in 2017, and in Thailand in 2018. At these meetings, educators and church leaders forged plans to align with the global strategic plan and continue the work of Adventist education. In the lead feature article for this issue, Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, worldwide director of education, gives a synopsis of the past quinquennium objectives and KPIs and shares a vision for the future.

The wise words of King Solomon remind us that God “has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart, yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end” (Ecclesiastes 3:11, NIV).<sup>7</sup> In this special issue of THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION®, we seek to showcase how Adventist education has reached up, in, and out with God, making a difference in the lives of students, educators, and their communities, even amid challenges and questions similar to those faced 30 years ago. The Adventist Church now has 13 divisions, and many of their names have changed since the first quinquennial issue was published in 1975. In the remaining articles of this issue, the world education directors for each division report on how the goals and key performance indicators were met during the 2015-2020 quinquennium and provide projections for the future. In addition to data that show how each division has grown, the authors also share stories of how Adventist education has the power to transform lives, reach the world, and educate for time and eternity.

We can only begin to imagine the future God has in mind for Adventist education! As we look back, we can see how God has guided, and therefore can have confidence in His continued leading. And we can be certain of God’s plan for education throughout eternity. In *Edu-*

*cation*, we are told: “The life on earth is the beginning of the life in heaven; education on earth is an initiation into the principles of heaven; the lifework here is a training for the lifework there. What we now are, in character and holy service, is the sure foreshadowing of what we shall be.”<sup>8</sup> We hope that as you read the reports in this issue, you will be inspired by the transforming power of Adventist education and encouraged to continue supporting its mission to reach the world.

**Recommended citation:**

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**NOTES AND REFERENCES**

1. A review of THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION® archives reveals that a special issue has been produced for at least 50 years. The production of the special issue corresponds with the General Conference (GC) Session. Beginning in 1970, GC sessions were scheduled for every quinquennium (five years). Before 1970, GC sessions were held every quadrennial (four years). Quinquennial issues began in 1975.
2. Victor S. Griffiths, “The House of Life,” *The Journal of Adventist Education* (Summer 1990): 5.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, *2021 Annual Statistical Report: Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2020 Statistics* (Silver Spring, Md.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2020), 87-91.
5. \_\_\_\_\_, *2019 Annual Statistical Report: Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2018 Statistics* (Silver Spring, Md.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2020), 8.
6. As of December 31, 2020, the most recent statistics available, the number of Adventist students enrolled in Adventist schools was as follows: tertiary, 160,997; worker-training programs, 7,159; secondary schools, 587,283; primary schools, 1,268,405.
7. Ecclesiastes 3:11, *New International Version* (NIV) Holy Bible, *New International Version*®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.
8. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1903), 307.