

THE ROLE OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION IN GLOBAL STRATEGY

By Humberto M. Rasi

Seventh-day Adventists have taken to heart the prophetic words of Jesus, "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14).¹ Our important role—individually and as a Christian community of believers—is to cooperate with heavenly agencies in effectively communicating "the eternal gospel ... to every nation, tribe, language and people" (Revelation 14:6).

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magnitude of the task implied in these words of Jesus: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing

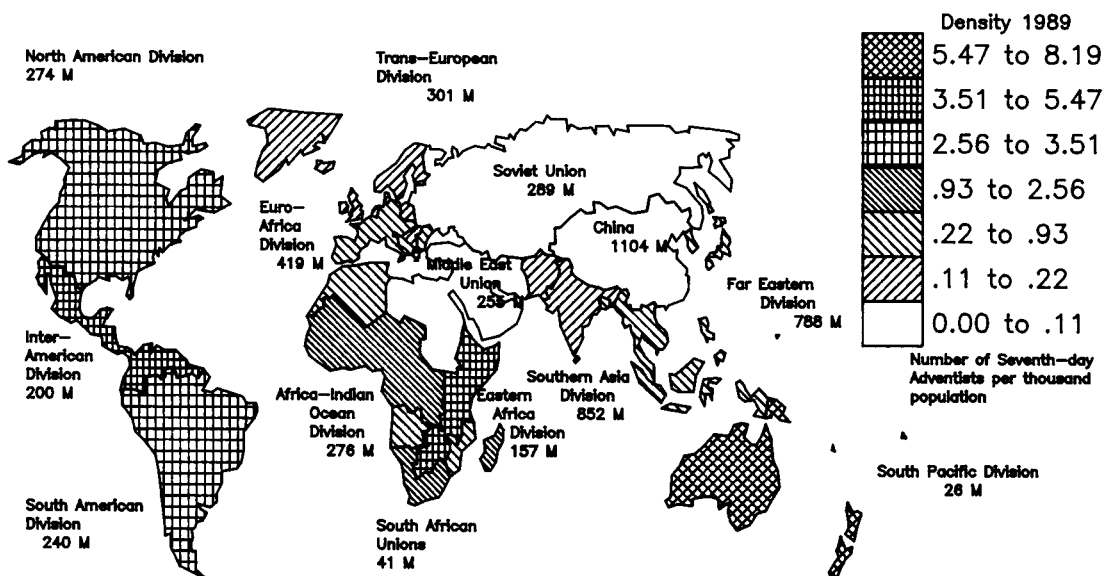
them ... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

The figures are indeed stark and the trends unrelenting: at the beginning of 1990, the world population stood at 5.3 billion, while Seventh-day Adventist world membership was 6.1 million. The world population increases by 280,000 per day, while Adventist membership grows by about 1,000 per day.

While we rejoice at the remarkable growth achieved by our church in its short history and at the strength of

WORLD POPULATION AND ADVENTIST PRESENCE

By Divisions and General Conference Attached Areas, in Millions, 1989



Map by C R Taylor, with Atlas Graphics

our membership in several areas, we must acknowledge that there are vast sectors of the world without an Adventist presence and that there are millions who have never heard the gospel story. (See Chart, "World Population and Adventist Presence.")

Aware of this reality, the leadership of our church voted in October of 1986 to develop a global strategy to effectively meet the challenge of world evangelization. The Global Strategy Committee of the General Conference was then appointed to mobilize all the resources of our church in order to accomplish the worldwide mission Christ entrusted to His followers.²

Adventist Global Strategy is being launched in 1990 with the purpose of achieving two objectives:

1. To establish a Seventh-day Adventist presence among population sectors where presently there is none, and

In what specific ways can the educational arm of our church—schools, teachers, students, administrators, departmental leaders—cooperate with Adventist Global Strategy?

2. To enlarge the Adventist presence where we currently have established denominational work.

In order to proceed systematically, the Global Strategy Committee of the General Conference has divided the world into population segments of approximately one million persons each, grouped ethno-linguistically. An analysis of the resulting 5,234 segments reveals that there is an Adventist presence in approximately 3,200 of them. This leaves roughly 2,000 population segments of at least one million each where currently there is no Seventh-day Adventist. The church will seek to establish by the year 2000 an Adventist presence in each of the remaining population segments. About 500 of these segments are located in the territory of existing division organizations of the world church, and their leaders will be responsible for developing plans to reach them. The remaining 1,500 segments fall in areas where there is no division organization. The Global

A. Creating an Awareness and Fostering a Sense of Global Mission			
	3rd* Level	2nd* Level	1st* Level
1. The General Conference Education Department—with funding from General Conference-Global Strategy Committee—cooperates with division and union educational leaders in developing curricular units on Global Strategy, with appropriate audio-visual and printed materials. These units are made available to teachers in Bible, modern languages, behavioral sciences, social studies, geography, English/journalism, and other academic disciplines for use in their classes.	X	X	X
2. School administrators feature Global Strategy programs—focusing on people, projects, challenges, and opportunities—during school chapels and assemblies. These may be linked with the student missionary program.	X	X	X
3. The GSC provides the editors of campus papers with relevant releases, stories, interviews, etc. Student editors are encouraged to publish these materials. The General Conference GSC and the division GSC offer yearly prizes for the best student-generated article or interview on Global Strategy.	X	X	
4. Directors of study tours abroad plan trips and itineraries that feature Global Strategy challenges and opportunities, including relevant readings and visits.	X	X	
5. The division GSC requests faculty members who are good communicators and are committed to Global Strategy to conduct workshops for ministers, leaders, and administrators. These workshops will be funded by the division GSC.	X		
6. Educators developing Bible curricular guides and instructional materials seek to incorporate in them the Global Strategy concept, including appropriate exercises.		X	X

B. Cooperate with Global Strategy Research and Planning			
	3rd Level	2nd Level	1st Level
1. Each educational institution appoints a person to serve as liaison with the General Conference-Global Strategy Committee or with the division Global Strategy Committee. This person receives the materials, assists in surveys, etc. If appropriate, an in-house GS committee is appointed to support and advise him or her.	X	X	X
2. Each educational institution establishes a Global Strategy Resource Center, or a library collection, with a basic bibliography provided by the GC-GSC. The center will also collect additional materials relevant to the area served by the college or secondary school.	X	X	
3. The in-house GSC cooperates with the GC-GSC or with the division GSC in locating and profiling unreached peoples within the division or the union, as well as overseas, using qualified personnel and computer facilities. These activities are funded either by the GC-GSC or the division GSC.	X		
4. The General Conference and division education departments develop a current file of qualified educational personnel (teaching in both denominational and non-denominational institutions) who may be called—through the Center for International Relations—to serve among unreached population sectors. ⁴	X	X	X
5. The GC, division, and union education departments, working through the AMiCUS Committee (Adventist Ministry to College and University Students), maintain a current list of graduate students. Upon completing their studies, these students may be called—through the Center for International Relations—to serve among unreached people segments. ⁵	X		

C. Training Qualified Personnel for Global Strategy			
	3rd Level	2nd Level	1st Level
1. Selected educational institutions, upon request from the General Conference-Global Strategy Committee or the division Global Strategy Committee, offer courses in the languages of target populations (for example, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, aboriginal languages, etc.).	X	X	
2. Selected educational institutions, upon request from the GC-GSC or the division GSC, train teachers specialized in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), to provide services in English Language Schools.	X		
3. Selected educational institutions, upon request from the GC-GSC or the division GSC, offer special workshops for student missionaries who will be sent to serve among unreached population sectors.	X		
4. The GC Education Department and the International Board of Education, working in coordination with the division education departments, foster and coordinate the development of graduate-level education programs and centers in each world division.	X		

D. Direct Involvement in Global Strategy Outreach and Penetration			
	3rd Level	2nd Level	1st Level
1. Each institution, in coordination with the General Conference-Global Strategy Committee and the division Global Strategy Committee, adopts an unreached population segment, develops a plan to establish an Adventist presence there, and prays systematically for its people. Tertiary institutions may adopt a population segment abroad; secondary schools target regional segments; elementary schools adopt a local population. If possible, the institution provides trained personnel for the mission.	X	X	X
2. Schools cooperate with division/union GSC plans to penetrate targeted regional or local unreached populations, by distributing Adventist publications, providing health services, offering literacy programs, broadcasting programs in campus radio stations, holding evangelistic series, etc.	X	X	X
3. The division and union education departments cooperate with the GC-GSC in establishing elementary and secondary schools among unreached population segments.		X	X
4. Schools provide leaders and volunteers to serve in short-term Adventist Development and Relief Agency- or Maranatha-sponsored projects targeted, at the request of the GC-GSC or the division GSC, to unreached population segments at home or abroad. Student volunteers receive tuition scholarships in exchange for short-term mission service, which is funded by the GSC.	X	X	
5. As new conferences/missions are created, the respective administrations—with guidance from the local General Conference Education Department—establish elementary and secondary schools to consolidate the faith of our youth and to attract non-Adventist families to the church.		X	X
6. Institutions cooperate with the Center for International Relations to facilitate student and teacher exchanges in order to establish an Adventist presence among target population segments.	X	X	
7. Directors of education at the division and union levels cooperate with the AMiCUS Committee (Adventist Ministry to College and University Students), empowering our students attending public universities to reach out to their colleagues, including those from other countries. ⁶	X		

- *3rd level—Higher education
- *2nd level—Secondary education
- *1st level—Elementary education

Strategy Committee will make adjustments as necessary in response to demographic and church membership changes in the target areas.

A Challenge for Adventist Education

Adventist educational institutions have been established with the purpose of helping the church to fulfill its worldwide gospel commission. This includes the training of ministers, teachers, business administrators, and others both for missionary outreach and for strengthening the established work. By educating committed laymen and qualified workers for the church organization, our schools have traditionally played a major role in moving Adventists toward the second objective of Global Strategy—to enlarge the Adventist presence where we currently have denominational work. In this connection, we now operate one of the largest church-related educational systems in the world.

We need to gain a broader perspective of our global mission and to inspire our school employees and students to participate.

The challenge for all Adventist educational leaders is to find ways to effectively cooperate with the church in the first objective of Global Strategy—to establish an Adventist presence in population segments where presently there is none. In other words, we must gain a broader perspective of our global mission and inspire our school employees and students to participate.

In what specific ways can the educational arm of our church—schools, teachers, students, administrators, departmental leaders—cooperate with Adventist Global Strategy? We see four broad areas of cooperation:

A. *Creating* among our members—and particularly among teachers and students—an awareness of the vast challenge and opportunity presented by millions who have not heard the gospel, and fostering a sense of global mission.³

B. *Cooperating* with leaders of Global Strategy units in research and planning, so as to achieve its two

Continued on page 81

ence," *Review and Herald* (June 23 and 30, 1903).

³³ A. G. Daniells to George Thomason, November 23, 1903.

³⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 215.

³⁵ Ellen G. White, "God's Interest in His Institutions," *Pacific Union Recorder* (May 8, 1902).

³⁶ ———, "The Spirit of Sacrifice," *Review and Herald* (January 4, 1906).

³⁷ Actions of 1913 Autumn Council, October 22, 1913.

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objectives.

C. *Training qualified personnel* to reach the unreached and to expand our current presence.

D. *Being involved in actual outreach and penetration* of unentered territories and population segments.

Cooperating With Adventist Global Strategy

The charts on pages 12 and 13 offer specifics on these four areas of education's involvement with Adventist Global Strategy in terms of the three levels of schooling (tertiary, second-

ary, and primary), while suggesting specific activities.

In the last book of the Bible, John recorded a moving vision of the final triumph of Christ and His followers at the end of time. "Before me," he wrote, "was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9). This glorious projection assures us that God's global strategy will be successfully accomplished and that countless millions, representing all peoples of the world, will be saved for eternity.

As educators catch the vision of the vast multitudes of unreached peoples and engage the talents of our youth in the exciting prospects of global mission, God will bless our efforts. As we pray, plan, teach, study, and work we can rely on His promise that through the Holy Spirit He will be with us "always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). □

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ All Bible texts in this article are taken from the New International Version. From *Holy Bible: New International Version*. Copyright © 1978 by the New York International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

² For a broader look at the challenge of world evangelization, see Humberto M. Rasi and Charles R. Taylor, "Adventist Global Strategy," *College and University Dialogue*, 1:2 (1989), pp. 5-8, 24.

³ Two books may be useful: *Getting Excited About Global Mission*, ed. by Dorothy Watts (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1990) includes many ideas on projects for Adventist churches and Sabbath schools. Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World: A Day-to-Day Guide to Praying for the World* (Waynesboro, Ga.: STL Books, 1986) contains a country-by-country summary of opportunities and challenges for Christian mission.

⁴ The GSC has recommended the establishment of a not-for-profit corporation to operate a Center for International Relations. The center will encourage Seventh-day Adventist members and institutions to make contacts and set up exchanges with non-Adventist populations and institutions in unentered areas of the world.

⁵ Readers interested in obtaining more information about this ministry and in receiving a sample copy of the journal *College and University Dialogue* may write to Israel Leito or Humberto M. Rasi at the General Conference of SDA, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A.

⁶ See Dayton Chong, "Adventist International Friendship Ministry," *College and University Dialogue*, 2:1 (1990), pp. 24-26.

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