

A RESOURCE CENTER IS BORN

•An 8th-grade teacher needs material on global missions for a Bible and social studies unit. She has heard of a curriculum produced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church but doesn't know how to locate it.

•A K-12 principal is planning a new-teacher orientation. He searches in vain for materials from an Adventist perspective to help him plan for the new school year.

•A conference superintendent is scheduled to meet with a church school board and would like examples of school board handbooks to share with them. She can't find anything.

If something like this has ever happened to you, you're not alone. Adventist educators spend countless hours searching for tools and resources to help in their work. Often, they cannot find anything and give up in despair.

Several years ago, a group of North American Division (NAD) educators discussed union conference initiatives for producing materials. They found a great deal of curriculum development occurring throughout the division, but many of these materials were largely unknown. Consequently, Adventist educators have spent much time reinventing the wheel—developing new resources while oblivious to work being done by others.

For this reason, the NAD Office of Education and faculty from the Andrews University School of Education are establishing a World Wide Web-based Adventist education clearinghouse to help identify current curriculum developments in the division and beyond. The Curriculum and Instruction Resource Center Linking Educators (CIRCLE) seeks to highlight and publicize outstanding examples of Adventist education worldwide.

Headquartered in Australia, the South Pacific Division has for years been a pacesetter in Adventist curriculum development at both the elementary and sec-

ondary levels. Other divisions also sponsor and encourage creative efforts by teachers in their attempts to achieve excellence in Adventist education. The CIRCLE resource center seeks to publicize these efforts and to provide descriptions of each resource. Especially exciting is the possibility of downloading actual documents from the Web site for immediate use!

A second impetus for the CIRCLE resource center is the North American Division's *Focus on Adventist Curriculum Trends for the 21st Century* (FACT21), a curriculum project designed to prepare NAD schools for future educational directions. The FACT21 project includes a set of nine preferred practices that the division wishes to nurture and encourage. The CIRCLE resource center will feature and support these preferred practices, making them accessible to all Adventist educators.

Curriculum Resources Needed

Several research studies of Adventist educators worldwide suggest that the need for resources is a persistent and recurring theme. In 1997, more than 461 secondary educators worldwide were asked for the greatest impediment to making their teaching thoroughly Christ-centered. *The teachers saw the lack of material resources and the training to use them as their greatest handicap.* This need was particularly acute among younger and newer teachers.

Research studies indicate that the personal computer is becoming a fixture in NAD education at every level. The same studies, however, reveal that many teachers fail to use the available technology. The CIRCLE project will try to make its resources so responsive and inviting that teachers will depend upon it for primary assistance. For this reason, several months will be spent in fine-tuning and pilot testing the resource center to ensure that it

meets the needs of classroom teachers. The Lake Union Conference, with headquarters near Andrews University, is cooperating with the CIRCLE group to pilot this resource using selected teachers.

Three educators are key to the implementation of the project. Randy Siebold, formerly a digital imaging technology teacher in the School of Technology at Andrews University, is currently completing his Ph.D. requirements at Indiana University in the area of instructional systems technology. Paul Brantley, coordinator of the CIRCLE project, has for years conducted curriculum resource assessment for the North American Division. He currently coordinates the curriculum and instruction program at Andrews. Glynis Bradfield, a graduate of Helderberg College in South Africa and Andrews Univer-

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sity, oversees day-to-day operations. Mrs. Bradfield combines computer expertise with significant teaching experience in Africa. The CIRCLE project officers are advised by a larger group representing the wider Adventist community.

The CIRCLE project begins pilot testing during 1999. Its goal is to begin functioning for classroom teachers in the year 2000. CIRCLE developers hope to make the resource timely, responsive, and useful to Adventist educators who seek to promote an education that is "higher than the highest human thought can reach." ☞