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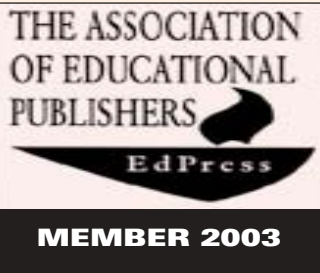
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Guest Editorial



Shirley Freed



Marilyn Eggers

SHIRLEY FREED AND MARILYN EGGERS

How Are We Connected?

In January 1999, a small group of Adventist educators met in Orlando, Florida, to discuss the possibilities of using the World Wide Web as a medium for delivering Adventist education. This volunteer group spearheaded a movement toward greater connectivity among church educators worldwide.

Referring to Adventist schools, Don Van Ornam of Southern Adventist University said, “Every light should be kept burning.” In the past decade, the total number of K-12 schools in the North American Division has dropped from 1,061 in 1992 to 992 in 2002,¹ and some of our colleges are struggling. In other parts of the world, despite rapid church growth, the percentage of Adventists attending our schools is not keeping up. Can distance education help make Adventist education available to more of our members worldwide?

We love Christmas tree lights! Now, it’s true—they look different on a snowy night in Michigan than on a rainy night in California, but the effect is the same. Lights have a way of drawing us in. We stand mesmerized by the color and flicker. The total effect depends on the contribution of each tiny light, all interconnected and working together.

Jesus didn’t say, “You are the lights of the world.” He said “You are *the* light,”² singular—a people connected, *one light*. Through the use of the Internet, the initiative begun in 1999 continues to bring us together. Adventist Virtual Learning Network³ (AVLN), now a non-profit organization, is committed to finding new ways we can collaborate to achieve our common goals.⁴

We hope the articles in this issue will stimulate readers to think about how to connect with others more effectively. To this end, we’ll introduce you to committed teachers who are “doing school” in radically different ways. If you’re trying some interactive Web-based teaching, you’ll find that you’re not alone as an innovator in our system. You’ll meet other people who have a vision for much more connectivity among us.

This issue of the JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION is unique because it illustrates in a practical way what the authors are talking about—online education. In fact, four of the articles are printed here only in condensed form—you’ll have to go to the Internet to read the full text of the article! We hope this won’t be too frustrating for you (if you don’t know how to get online or lack Internet access, contact Shirley Freed at the ad-

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Shirley Freed, Ph.D., is Professor of Leadership and Qualitative Research in the School of Education at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, where she currently teaches all of her classes online. You can contact her by E-mail at: freed@andrews.edu or by mail at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI 49104, U.S.A.

Marilyn Eggers, Ph.D., is the North American Division Distance Education Director and also works with Home Study International Online. She writes from LaSelva Beach, California, and can be reached by E-mail at: meggerts@sbcglobal.net. As coordinators for this special issue on distance education, Drs. Freed and Eggers spent countless hours compiling information, editing and rewriting articles, contacting authors, obtaining peer reviews, and cheerfully (and promptly!) responding to hundreds of queries from the Editor. The Editorial Staff of the JOURNAL expresses thanks for all their advice, explanations, and hands-on contributions to the production and success of this issue.



Doing Adventist education research? Use CIRCLE's new online survey service. It's fast and easy, saves time and money, and is available to all Adventist students, teachers, and education administrators.

Find out more at: circle.adventist.org

Guest Editorial

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dress on page 3, and she'll send you a hard copy).

In addition to the Web-based articles, all of the notes and references for all the articles in this issue are also posted on the World Wide Web for your convenience at <http://www.avln.org/jae/>. You'll find it much easier to locate the references from this address rather than typing in all the URLs.

As you read, keep thinking of ways we can collaborate as administrators, teachers, students, parents, and pastors to keep the Adventist light burning brightly. Can the Holy Spirit use the World Wide Web to help connect us? We think He already is! ✍

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. <http://nadeducation.adventist.org/news/thestats.html/>.
2. Matthew 5:14-16, NKJV.
3. <http://www.avln.org/>.
4. For an update on AVLN activities, see <http://www.avln.org/jae/>.

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