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THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION publishes articles concerned with a variety of topics pertinent to Adventist education. Opinions expressed by our writers do not necessarily represent the views of the staff or the official position of the Department of Education of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION (ISSN 0021-8480) is published bimonthly, October through May, plus a single summer issue for June, July, August, and September by the Department of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600. TELEPHONE (301) 680-5075; FAX (301) 622-9627; E-mail: rumbleb@gc.adventist.org. Subscription price, U.S. \$18.25. Add \$1.00 for postage outside the U.S. Single copy, U.S. \$3.75. Periodical postage paid at Silver Spring, Maryland, and additional mailing office. Please send all changes of address to P.O. Box 5, Keene, TX 76059, including both old and new address. Address all editorial and advertising correspondence to the Editor. Copyright 2006 General Conference of SDA, POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION, P.O. Box 5, Keene, TX 76059.

Enhancing the Quality of Bible Teaching

The best ministerial talent should be employed to lead and direct in the teaching of the Bible in our schools. Those chosen for this work need to be thorough Bible students; they should be men who have a deep Christian experience, and their salary should be paid from the tithe” (Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 431).

Way back when I was in high school in the 1970s, I thought that most Bible teachers were ministers who ended up in the classroom because they were ineffective in their chosen field. While this was obviously an over-generalization, sometimes perception is reality.

Bible teaching should be a ministry that one desires and is well trained to perform. I believe that religion courses should be the most important part of our curriculum—and yet many times, we assign the classes to part-time people who are not committed to making the classroom a priority, or do not know how to teach Bible effectively. We should always have the most committed and best-trained teachers assigned to our religion classes—people who know what they believe and are able to communicate it effectively and positively to students. However, equally important is for the student to get different perspectives from a variety of teachers. “Different teachers should have a part in the work, even though they may not all have so full an understanding of Scriptures” (ibid., p. 432).

We also need to have a strong, appealing, up-to-date curriculum. The North American Division has updated its Bible curriculum about every 10 years or so. Should this occur more often? In some parts of the world, students do not even have their own Bibles, and instructors have no teacher’s edition or money to purchase resource materials for themselves or their students. This is a tragedy that needs to be remedied.

I believe every Seventh-day Adventist school—from elementary through graduate level—should make religion classes mandatory. For many students who are not Adventists, this provides us with a wonderful opportunity to share Jesus Christ in a positive manner. It also allows us to expand the understanding of students who have been Adventists since birth. However, we need to make sure we have the correct teachers in the classroom.

Most of our religion teachers are asked to do a lot. Many serve as school chaplains, coordinators for school service and outreach programs, and recruiters—in addition to teaching a full load. Despite all the demands on their time, religion teachers have an unparalleled opportunity and a sacred responsibility to minister to the spiritual needs of their students. This requires a lot of extra time in counseling and just sharing Jesus Christ. Sometimes, the only reward will be Christ’s “well done” within the heart of the teacher.

Principals, presidents, headmasters—make sure that your Bible teachers are the most effective teachers in your schools. It is our solemn responsibility to educate students for eternity, and a vital part of that is both providing students with accurate knowledge about God and inviting them to accept Jesus as their Savior and to walk with Him throughout their lives and into eternity. Yes, all teachers in Adventist schools should be teaching for eternity; however, Bible teachers have a special and sacred responsibility in this area. Don’t just assign whoever’s available that period to teach the Bible class. Make sure the person you choose is on fire for God and is trained to share the gospel effectively. Then make sure that he or she has money for resource materials as well as time and a subsidy for in-service and advanced training.

The editors and writers hope that this special issue of the JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION will serve to stimulate thought and result in concrete planning that will enhance the quality of religion teaching throughout the Seventh-day Adventist system, at all levels.



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