



Mike Mile Lekic

# EXCELLENCE AND QUALITY FOR *LIFE* AND E T E R N I T Y

Aristotle once said that excellence is not an act but a habit and a continuous progressive movement into the future. Excellence is about dedicating oneself to a life of continuous improvement. It is about being happy with what one has accomplished, but recognizing that there is always room for improvement. In a *JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION* article in 1999, Paul Brantley proposed “A Continuous Cycle-of-Excellence Model” that begins with a definition of the school’s purpose/reasons for existence; followed by plans/resources, educational practices/realities; and finally, products/results—the educational effect on the minds and hearts of students; with continual evaluation and improvement at each level.<sup>1</sup> Ellen White encouraged excellence in Adventist schools by stating, “Something better is the watchword of education, the law of all true living.”<sup>2</sup> The Bible also encourages the quest for excellence. It says that whatever we do, we should do it with all our might (Ecclesiastes 9:10), and to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Addressing more than 6,000 teachers in Dallas, Texas, during the first North American Division (NAD) Teachers Convention in a teacher dedication ceremony on August 16, 2000, Don Schneider, then NAD president, said, “The focus of Seventh-day Adventist education is talking about and confronting students with Jesus Christ. . . . We are in the business of telling people about Jesus no matter what our job is.” We like to see our schools built on the Rock, Jesus Christ. Only as we seek to be like Him, our Master Teacher, will we experience true success.

Excellence and quality in Adventist Christian education represent more than operating educational institutions with good reputations, adequate resources, quality performance in teaching and learning, high organizational effectiveness and stakeholders’ satisfaction, market competitiveness, and sound financial operations.

Adventist education promotes harmonious development of physical, mental, and spiritual powers, the training of youth to be thinkers and not mere reflectors of other people’s thoughts, the preparation to be effective citizens on this earth and to be rewarded with citizenship in the new earth. It also endeavors to restore in human beings the “image” of God, their Creator (Genesis 1:27) and the source of all knowledge and wisdom. Godliness, “godlikeness,” is the goal to be reached.<sup>3</sup>

When Rick Bacchus, former president of the Ontario Conference in Canada, was asked why he believed in Adventist education, he said: “I attest to the fact that the lessons one learns, and the character one forms within the atmosphere of a Bible-based curriculum, are more precious than gold. . . . Not only do Adventist education and the work of redemption go hand in hand, Adventist education is the work of redemption. In the support of our schools, we are engaged in missionary work of the highest order. The salvation of our boys and girls, of our youth, is at stake. We cannot afford not to become active participants in this vital work. The business of Adventist education is God’s business.”<sup>4</sup>

While carrying out God’s business, let us listen to one another as we continue to pursue excellence and quality in Adventist education. Let us endeavor to be quality driven, customer conscious, and continuously seeking to improve our educational services. As we do this, I am confident that God will richly bless our efforts in this new quinquennium (2010-2015).

#### REFERENCES

1. Paul Brantley, “Can Education Be Adventist and Excellent, Too?” *The Journal of Adventist Education* 61:5 (Summer 1999), pp. 4-8.
2. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1903), p. 296.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-19.
4. Quoted in Ontario Conference Teachers’ Newsletter, June 1996.