



Nurturing Hope for a **New** Generation

During the past five years, Adventist education in the South American Division (SAD) has received many blessings. Looking back, we can see how God has guided us in every plan and every project from beginning to completion. We have experienced God's blessings as we have attempted to accomplish the mission entrusted to us.

Ellen White describes well the goal of Adventist education: "Since God is the source of all true knowledge, it is, as we have seen, the first object of education to direct our minds to His own revelation of Himself" (*Education*, p. 16).

Among the notable projects we developed during this quinquennium were the following: enrollment campaigns; professional meetings for boarding school deans and chaplains,

and for university presidents; a university professor exchange; a scientific research meeting; TV programs in Spanish and Portuguese; distance education; the development of ADEMS (Adventist Educational Management System); as well as the development of digital textbooks and training of high school teachers in the use of tablets.

Adventist education participated in the International Education Fair, which featured more than 15,000 participants and 180 exhibitions by international companies that focus on education. We are also excited about the progress in developing curricular materials for Adventist education, starting in Brazil and expanding to the remaining countries of the SAD.

Enrollment Campaigns

Every year, the SAD Department of Education organizes enrollment campaigns that complement other school activities. In Brazil, the enrollment process has been centralized as a result

of the establishment of the education Web portal.

Meetings for Deans and Chaplains of Boarding Schools

SAD's first biennial meeting of boarding school deans and chaplains took place in 2011. Reaffirming the work of these vital employees was an important goal of the meeting, along with helping them feel a part of the Adventist education team throughout the division territory.

Education Councils and University Presidents Meetings

The SAD Department of Education held annual meetings for its education directors and university presidents. Up to 200 attendees have participated in each of the events held in Brazil, Peru, and Chile, which featured topics such as "Management and Research," "Identity and Mission," and "Every Student a Disciple."

B Y E D G A R D L U Z

In 2012, our 16 tertiary schools signed inter-institutional agreements, which have facilitated interaction with the education ministries of the different countries. Other highlights of the meetings have included the scheduling of a council for professors from SAD and several other divisions, as well as the signing of bilateral agreements between universities.

Professor Exchange

Another innovative project implemented this quinquennium was an intra-division faculty exchange program among our higher education institutions, with each school receiving one or more professors from another country. This provided a rich experience for the host institutions as well as for the professors, who were able to share and acquire new knowledge, experiences, and discoveries.

Research Initiatives

Since research sponsored by higher education institutions generates important information and knowledge and contributes to wise decision-making, we have created a SAD research committee, which will establish policy and take action to promote research projects that foster the mission of the church and contribute to the development of society. Among its objectives are the following: create research policies, establish inter-institutional networks, promote relationships and training; establish research branches and a project bank; conduct projects in areas of common interest; create channels for the diffusion of the results of the investigations; and maintain up-to-date databases of the research that has been conducted.

During the past quinquennium, many important events were organized by the SAD: The South American Research Management and Investigation Council (Quinquennial Education

Council) held in 2012 dealt with the following topics: teaching strategies, integration of faith and learning, school management, basic education, finance, and institutional scientific research. Additional research councils will be organized by each of the SAD higher education institutions, under the coordination of the division education department.

In 2013, the annual SAD education meeting, dealing with the topic of "Identity and Mission," was held in Peru, where we also held the first collaborative meeting with the Inter-American Division.

Program Evaluation: PAAEB and PAEE

The Adventist Evaluation Program of Basic Education (in Portuguese, *Programa Adventista de Avaliação da Educação Básica*, or PAAEB), and the Adventist Evaluation Program of Aca-



Meeting for directors of education and higher education administrators at Ñaña, Peru, in 2013.

demics (in Spanish, *Proyecto Adventista de Evaluación Educativa*, or PAEE) are programs that evaluate the performance of schools in the division's education network and help administrators discover strategies to help schools address deficiencies.

We started in 2011 with a single assessment in Brazil, for 5th graders. The following year, 9th graders from elementary school (in Brazil, elementary school goes up to 9th grade, and high school is only three years long) were included in the areas of language and mathematics. In 2014, the program was expanded to include freshman, sophomore, and junior high school students (all subjects).

- Three hundred and fifteen schools participated in the initial evaluation in Brazil:

- 12,000 students (5th grade) participated in 2012;

- 26,000 students (5th and 9th grade) participated in 2013;

- 36,000 students (5th grade, 9th grade, and high school sophomores) participated in 2014.

Thus far, the assessment groups, comprised of two or three researchers each, have focused on areas such as identifying academic and evaluation needs, designing and implementing research projects, developing evaluation instruments, printing and distributing evaluations, creating teacher-training tutorials, and presenting reports produced by the assessment teams. In 2013, the pilot evaluation was carried out in the Spanish-speaking countries; in 2015, two additional members were added to the evaluation team; and the project continues.

TV Programs

The weekly program entitled *Educación* (*Educación* in Spanish, and *Educação* in Portuguese) was launched in early 2011, followed by a Spanish version later that year. The programs are also distributed through social media via Facebook and Twitter.

New Degrees

The South American Division recently received approval from the church's International Board of Education to implement its own new program-approval process for most undergraduate programs, which will facilitate faster approval of new majors/degrees and ensure that our schools focus on mission and remain competitive with state institutions while maintaining high quality. Site visits for proposals for new degrees in theology, medicine, and teaching programs, as well as all postgraduate degrees, will continue to be approved by the IBE and IBMTE.

Every institution identifies desired new majors and degrees and includes this information in reports submitted during institutional evaluations by the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day

Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (AAA), the International Board of Education (IBE), or the International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (IBMTE). After the assessment visits, each school receives feedback and makes the necessary changes within the allotted time. A final report is sent to the IBE/IBMTE/AAA for its confirmation and to be recorded by those boards. So far, 11 programs at five campuses have been evaluated in areas as diverse as information technology; financial engineering; architecture; and physical education, activity, and sports.

Initiatives of the Creation Committee

During the past quinquennium, the SAD has developed several initiatives to



South American Division delegates to the 2014 International Conference on the Bible and Science, St. George, Utah, U.S.A., visit the Grand Canyon.



Drs. Maximina Contreras and Loren Agrey sign an Interagency Agreement between Peruvian Union University and Asia-Pacific International University in 2013.

increase support for creationism. Recently, the division education department signed a collaboration agreement with the Brazilian Creationist Society (BCS), which will result in BCS receiving more support for collaborative activities. In August 2014, the division sent 50 delegates (up to three delegates from each college and university) to the International Conference on the Bible and Science in St. George, Utah, U.S.A.

Throughout the division territory, the SAD Department of Education has organized a variety of courses, meetings, and mini-councils on the topic of creation. It also supported the production of the film *Creation*, and plans to distribute more than 260,000 copies of the DVD throughout the division educational network. Finally, the magazine *Historia da Vida [The Story of Life]*, which already has many editions in Portuguese, will also become available in Spanish during 2015, with an expected print run of 650,000 copies. This book will be distributed to every elementary and high school student in the SAD.

Distance Education

A large number of church members choose distance education for a variety of reasons, such as Sabbath keeping, finances, the need to work while studying, and the lack of high-quality institutions near their homes. Thus, the SAD's long-term goal is to start offering online courses in Brazil in 2016 and then to expand distance learning to the entire South American continent.

Adventist Educational Management System (ADEMS) and IT Training

In 2010, the division voted to approve the creation of a unique integrated technology system for its higher education institutions, which will benefit a large number of services such as secretariat, finance, library, philanthropy, research, emergency systems, and more. In addition, because of rapidly advancing technology, the SAD will seek ways to incorporate information and communication technologies in every institution in our network to ensure that our teachers stay up to date in these areas.

In support of this initiative, we are providing our professors with an on-

line IT course. Nearly 200 professors in the largest Brazilian unions have already participated in the training; a second group of 200 Brazilian and Hispanic professors will complete the course in November 2015.

Virtual Training for Educators

During 2015, the SAD Education Department plans to offer its teachers a variety of in-service training topics in a virtual-learning environment. These will include Integration of IT in Education for elementary teachers; Coordination of Adventist Evaluation Program of Basic Education (PAAEB); and Adventist Evaluation Program of Academics (PAEE) for union, field, and school coordinators; as well as training for education directors; children's education workshops; and creationism.

In 2015, approximately 15,000 teachers from all the fields in the SAD participated in the South American Online Teacher Congress to celebrate 120 years of Adventist education in South America. The congress will also include continuing-education training for teachers in several areas of elementary and high school teaching.

We thank God for the great blessings bestowed upon the South American Division during this quinquennium and feel certain that He has abundant blessings in store for the future. We want to continue to place ourselves in the hands of the Giver of Life so that He can use us according to His will. ☞



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