

Acting on Our Vision With Passion and Compassion

Mike Lekic, Director of Education, Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada

The King's James Version of Proverbs 29:18 reads, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Unless we have a clear understanding where we are headed, the probability of a successful journey is severely limited. Also, vision without action is merely a dream.



A number of initiatives undertaken during the past few years enabled us to see more clearly where we are in terms of our educational services, and to decide where we want to be in order to better serve our constituency and fulfil our mission.

Our Five-Year Education Master Plan, currently under revision, covers administration, spirituality, marketing and enrolment, curriculum and instruction, school facilities, finances and development, and continuing evaluation and revision. This plan was developed by the Adventist education leaders with some input and feedback from the church members across Canada. It is a working master plan that outlines our intent (see <http://catnet.sdacc.org/resources/masterplan/>). Although all areas of the plan are important, we believe that spiritual growth and development is paramount. Addressing over 6,000 teachers in Dallas, Texas during the North American Division Teachers' Convention in a dedication ceremony on August 16, 2000, Don Schneider, North American Division 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 (Matt. 16:18). Only as we seek to be like Him, will we experience success.

The education survey, sent to 5,000 members in 40 churches across Canada, gave us a clearer idea as to how church members perceived our schools and teachers. Major findings were printed in the June 1999 issue of the Messenger, and are the basis for future plans to improve our education system. That information was also very useful as we prepared for the Education Summit '99. The summit attendees voted numerous observations and recommendations for consideration and implementation by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC) Board. The SDACC Board has voted the Education Summit '99 recommendations and action plans to implement those recommendations. Conference superintendents of education now monitor action plans to be implemented by the conferences, churches and schools. The president/principal or his/her designee monitors the implementation of action plans to be implemented by the Canadian University College, Parkview Adventist Academy and Kingsway College. The SDACC Director of Education monitors the implementation of action plans by the SDACC, and reports to the SDACC Board on the total implementation.

After several years of intensive visioning and planning, our emphasis now is on acting on our vision with passion and compassion. "Vision is the stuff of our dreams. Passion is our energy to make it real. The two go together like a horse and rider. In the mind of one is the goal, in the other lies the means to get there" (Peter Urs Bender, *Leadership from Within*, p.87). Compassion, in turn, describes the way to get there. Compassion is not just feeling sorry for or having a heartfelt, wrenching feeling for someone. It is that, plus a desire to do something to help the situation, to take action. Chuck Swindoll once said, "Others will not care how much we know (I would add-and do) until they know how much we care."

Four years ago I invited you to give us your input and feedback as we pursue excellence in Adventist Christian education. I have asked you to share your dreams and expectations of the educational system of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada. Thank you to all of you who have talked to us and offered us your valuable opinion and counsel. I would like to now ask you for your support as we endeavour to implement the vision God has given us in preparing our youth for time and eternity.

This article was published in the Canadian Adventist Messenger, March 2001.