

Where Do We Go From Here?

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On July 4, 2008 as I drove along Canada's fastest and busiest highway, I received a telephone call from an alarmed teacher with the news "Peel Adventist School is on fire." My first response was "Whatever," but the urgency and fervour in her voice made me realize that this was, in fact, a tragedy in the making. Within an hour, the fire had roared across the roof and then imploded, completely destroying our building but not our school. Two months later, the Lord blessed us with a new location which is not perfect but adequate for a time.



This situation revealed to me the enormous inefficiencies of our system. We do not have adequate provision to assist schools experiencing this kind of tragedy. Yes, there is insurance that will provide funds to rebuild, and supply replacement costs and loss of business, but these funds are not enough to advance Christian education in that community.

Parents today require more of the system. They want new facilities, with adequate furnishings and equipment, improved academics, quality teachers, and a safe environment. Gone are the days of "church basement" schools. But the lack of finances continues to plague our churches. Where will the funds come from to build a new school and meet the needs of the changing population of our church? This major challenge must be addressed throughout our system so that Adventist education will continue for the next generation.

Increased funds are required for new buildings, endowment funds for parents who cannot afford Christian education, budgets that go beyond just balancing to include depreciation, capital for upgrading, expansion and new state of the art equipment, and a reserve fund. Simply stated, fiscal responsibility is mandatory to operate our schools in the black while providing for and maintaining enrolment. The manner in which the system is funded needs to be revisited and revised from the General Conference to the North American Division to the local Conference so as to help alleviate the financial problems of most of our schools.

Where do we go from here? Questions must be answered, mind-sets must be changed, and visionary thinking must be in place for the future. This year I have been praying for the power of the Holy Spirit to rest, rule, abide and show Himself like He has never done before. I am confident that something great is going to happen because in spite of all our challenges, our theme, "How may I serve you," is the driving force behind everything that we will accomplish this year. We have called for the students to serve God with all the fervor and zeal they possess, and the more we serve our Savior and Lord, the more He will bless our efforts. As a testimony to this, over ten students have already been baptized this school year and that number is steadily increasing. As our students give their lives to

Christ willingly, we will see the power of God moving in our school system. We are off to a dynamic start and this is just September.

Sure, I have a wish list which includes a state of the art complex, impeccable finances, a large reserve fund, and a new system of funding that provides for the needs of the new millennium student. Above all of this, however, I pray that our students will experience good health and that their souls prosper. What would it profit the students if they had the ideal school environment according to public standards and lose their souls? We are going to realize our ideals one day, especially as the church, school and home continue to work together, leaning on each other and on the everlasting arms of Jesus. It may not be perfect, but it's worth it.