The Advent message grew in the Corozal District, and numerous youths and elders had the desire and dream of having their own Seventh-day Adventist secondary school in the 1960s. In 1967, local elders Artemio Clarke and Marcial Magana with Pastor Winston D. Cunningham decided to make the dream a reality. They sought a government-issued license to open a secondary school through Mrs. Gwendolyn Lizarraga, the minister of education. Land for this school would come from the minister of lands, Florencio Marin.

Early in 1969, construction began; by September, 53 intern students and eight teachers embarked on this educational journey to create the Adventist Vocational College, the 53rd Seventh-day Adventist educational institution in the Inter-American Division. With a 50-year history, the institution has nurtured many teenagers and prepared them for service as mandated by the Adventist Church’s mission.

The church’s continuous growth led to other Seventh-day Adventist secondary institutions opening, which fulfilled the church’s educational need. Consequently, the Adventist Vocational College was changed to day school in 1987.

Numerous donors and sponsors were committed to have the institution built. Among others, these included: the British high commissioner, the Canadian high commissioner, Maranatha, “The Quiet Hour,” the government of Belize, government ministers, mission and union presidents, school board members, principals, parent teacher associations, teachers, the “Give Me a Chance” scholarship program, the student cultural society, “Food for the Poor,” missionaries, and church members.

In 1987, the college's administration saw fit to change the name of Adventist Vocational College to “Belize Adventist College” with the rationale that the original name limited the college’s growth and capacity due to financial constraints because vocational courses were not offered to the maximum. Upon this name change, more academic courses were included.

All teachers of the college possess a Government’s License at the Secondary Level, and most have a bachelor's degree in areas of discipline, while a few have associates' degrees in technical areas. Members of the administration have master’s degrees. The college offers electives in clothing and textiles, home economics, carpentry, visual arts, technical drawing, and music. It also offers graduate diplomas in the areas of science, business, general business, and administrative assistance. Agriculture is a compulsory course.

The college has had three major evaluations. Two came from the Inter-American Division accreditation team. The third came from the Quality Child-Friendly Initiative of the Ministry of Education, since the school has been grant-aided since 1989. The establishment of an organized campus church made worship accessible to teachers and students. Another milestone was the creation of Belize Adventist Junior College in September 1999.

Constructing a paradigm with students, infrastructure, campus maintenance, curricula, finances, and the internalization of the institution’s mission has surmounted challenges in the quest to fulfill the Mission of Belize Adventist College.

SOURCES


NOTES


5. Leslie Gillet, interview by author, Belize City, Belize, June 4, 2019.


8. Aquilino Jesse, Sr., and Joel Clarke, interview by author, Corozal, Belize, June 2019.