
Northern European Division

By Jan Paulsen

The prophet Daniel described elements in one segment of European history as “partly weak and partly strong.” The same could describe Adventist education in Europe. The “clay” is often not of our making, since the laws of the land and the bounds of possibility seriously limit the church’s ability to offer an acceptable Christian education. However, the “iron” in Adventist education is in some countries very prominent and sound. It testifies to the vision and commitment of leaders over many years, as well as the strength of the Adventist home.

One union, comprising Denmark and Norway with 9,000 church members, has 21 schools: 18 primary schools, 2 secondary schools (“gymnasium”)/junior colleges, and a 4-year physical therapy school that enjoys a higher reputation and wider recognition internationally than any of the 13 state-run physical therapy schools in Scandinavia. (Begun in 1898, it is also the oldest in Denmark.) The quality of education offered at our Danish Secondary School/Junior College was publicly recognized when its principal for the the past 12 years, Arne Wagenblast, was honored with the “Order of Daneborg” and ushered into an audience with the Queen of Denmark, to whom he gave a beautifully leather-



Director of Education
Northern European Division
St. Albans, Hertfordshire
England

bound copy of the book *Education*.

In 1982 the school began operating its own local radio station after receiving one of only a few such permits granted in Denmark. This station now broadcasts 26 hours per week.

The Norwegian Junior College at Tyrifjord, under its new principal, R. Beckhaug, has also established a local radio station and studio used for both transmission and regular instruction classes. A new program in computer science has recently been introduced.

In Iceland, the volcanic island in the

North Atlantic, our churches of 500 members have maintained church schools (now 3) since 1928. One of these is a secondary boarding school. A totally new primary church school project is being developed in the capital, Reykjavik.

The Swedish Secondary School/Junior College has been challenged by the public school authorities to justify its existence and right to state support by showing that the education offered there is viable and *different* from that offered at state schools. Often we fall

into the trap of striving for similarities with the state system, but here the state is saying, "Show us that you are different! Not just in course content, but in your whole educational experience." This challenge is taken very seriously.

Holland, a somewhat reluctant convert to the traditional Adventist concept of church schools, has taken the big leap! After decades of operating only a secondary school/junior college, they opened their first church primary school on August 1, 1984. By the same time this year, they expect to have between 80 and 90 pupils with 4 teachers. Director of Education P. Sol says that they aim for the school to become "a model school in the Dutch educational system."

Finland has developed a strong two-year ministerial training program at their secondary school, Toivonlinnan Yhteiskoulu. The attractive campus has a beautiful new dormitory for girls, completed in 1984.

To supplement the teaching that Polish children receive in state primary schools, our church has established 80 state-approved "Catechetical Centres" around the country where our children receive Bible instruction every week by Adventist ministers and teachers.

The seminary, which has just constructed a new dormitory for 100 students, is upgrading its secondary program into a two-year junior college.

Stanborough School, the "senior" secondary school in the British Union, recently began offering computer science for public examination ("O"-level). This innovation coincided with the appointment of a new principal, Ivor Margerison.

At the beginning of this quinquennium a new secondary day school was opened in London. It is already viewed by public education authorities as a model for what can be accomplished in inner-city education. Late in 1984 the division board of education recommended that the John Loughborough School be upgraded to a full secondary school (with "A" level courses) and that the Board of Regents recognize this upgrading.

Newbold College is a special star on the Northern European educational horizon. During the past quinquennium an Institute of Church Growth and Pastoral Ministries has been estab-

lished, as well as a new B.B.A. program in Business, and M.A. program in Education, a regular 4-quarter post-graduate program leading to an M.A. in Religion, and a unique 6-quarter program leading to an M.A. degree with dual majors in Biblical studies and church growth. The latter program is geared to ministerial training. Two years ago a new seminary building was completed. All of Newbold's degree programs are affiliated with Andrews University.

Led by a new principal, Dr. S. Thompson, the college and its staff give excellent training and educational direction for the youth of the Northern European Division. □