



Orville Woolford (right), director of education, Trans-European Division of SDA, discusses the TED Education Convention with George H. Akers, General Conference world director of education.

### Keeping Christ in the Curriculum

An Interview With Orville Woolford, Trans-European Division Director of Education

A major SDA educational event took place on the beautiful campus of the University of Kent at Canterbury, England, on July 24-30, 1987. The 275 participants from 10 countries enjoyed an intellectual and professional feast provided by an outstanding array of speakers.

The convention began with a keynote address by Dr. George Akers, General Conference education director. On Sabbath Dr. Jan Paulsen, president of the Trans-European Division, issued a spiritual challenge to convention participants. On Sunday the session began with a warm welcome to historic Canterbury by the mayor and mayoress of the city. Participating speakers included Dr. Stanley Chace, dean of the School of Education at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan; Dr. Norwida Marshall, associate director of education for the Southern Union Conference, Decatur, Georgia; Dr. H. M. Rasi, associate director of education, General Conference of SDA; Prof. V. Westrhenen, University of Utrecht; and Drs. S. Thompson and M. Pearson, from Newbold College.

Following is an interview with Orville Woolford, Trans-European Division education director, and organizer of the convention.

The education convention of the Trans-European Division had as its theme "Keeping Christ in the Curriculum." This choice of emphasis for the gathering of nearly 300 Adventist educators could reflect a concern about separating spiritual from educational activities in our schools. How spiritual is the Adventist curriculum in the schools in our division?

We depend largely on teachers to provide the spiritual input as, at this stage, we do not yet produce our own curriculum materials. The difficulty our schools face in how well they are able to develop curricula with a strong spiritual emphasis arises largely from two sources.

First, our students must take external examinations. We have no control in determining the syllabus that will be studied. These exams are so important to the future of our students that schools always have the temptation to focus almost exclusively upon preparing students to pass them. As a result, the spiritual and aesthetic dimensions of true education are liable to suffer serious neglect.

Second, most of our teachers have not had the opportunity to be trained at one of our institutions in SDA educational philosophy and methodology. These two factors motivated our choice of theme for this convention.

### Is secularization one of the major challenges facing Adventist schools in Europe?

Indeed it is certainly one of the serious challenges. Schools are unable to insulate themselves totally from the society in which they exist. Secularization is clearly one of the characteristics of contemporary



Humberto M. Rasi (right), General Conference associate director of education, presents the Medallion of Distinction to O. C. Bjerkan to honor him for giving more than 40 years of service to Adventist education.

European society, and as such, all religious systems feel the effect of this force. The impact of secular thinking on ethics, for instance, can seriously affect attitudes toward the counsels of Ellen White. This challenge must be diligently met.

Secularization as expressed in materialism can surely cause the career orientation of students to be less inclined toward service and ministry. Moreover, as humans continue to address their perceived needs through the use of palliatives provided by modern science and technology, they leave very little room for God in their lives.

This only increases our challenge to demonstrate with conviction that the basic needs of humanity can only be truly satisfied through a personal and meaningful relationship with God.

**How is competition in the educational market affecting our Adventist education philosophy?**

We have not had a noticeable adverse effect on the philosophy of our educational system as a result of the competition from other schools. In general the schools in our division compare very favorably with the schools in the local community in terms of scholarship, and in the academic achievement of their students. Indeed enrollment figures are the maximum possible in some cases. This is so for one major reason. The educational program that we offer can usually claim to be decidedly different, in that students are offered academic excellence plus much more than merely an education derived from books.

**In evaluating the convention, what feature of its program would you say was most challenging to its participants?**

It is difficult to single out any one feature, but I believe the plenary session proved to be quite stimulating, informative, and challenging. As the convention progresses and participants began to perceive more and more how Christian principles, concepts, and values can be interwoven in a meaningful, natural way in all curricula they became more and more excited.

It was good news to many that "keeping (or emphasizing) Christ in the curricula" was not simply an invitation to use Bible material in a superficial way. Participants also found it very valuable to spend time in subject-section meetings where they could discuss common problems and share their experiences. In fact, a resolution was passed recommending that more time should be provided for such small group meetings in future conventions.

For me one great feature was the spirit of the convention. It became a celebration of the joy of our teaching mission as well as a time for professional enrichment.

**Where do we go from here?**

In many ways the educational system of the division

is moving in the right direction. We have much of which to be proud. We are beginning to enroll more of our Adventist youth. We need to work further toward increasing the percentage of our youth in Adventist schools. Therefore, we must increase the number of elementary and secondary schools wherever possible.

At the same time we must increase the courses offered at Newbold College. Recently a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in education have been added. We must encourage and assist the college administration to continue this excellent progress.

We must also initiate a long-term program of curriculum development and in-service training to assist our teachers in delivering Adventist education at its distinctive best in all our institutions.

There is also a great need to touch the lives of the many students who are not in an SDA school or college.

Finally, we must not hide our light under a bushel. We need to make greater efforts to raise our church members' awareness of the value of what we have to offer and use every opportunity to set before the world an example in education that will honor the great God we serve.



*Four outstanding educators from the Euro-Africa Division were honored during a convention held in Collonges-sous-Salève, France, in July 1987. The Medallion of Distinction was given to Raul Posse, Alfred Vaucher (in absentia) and Jean Zurcher; the Award of Excellence to Margarethe Undritz. Pictured above (from left) are Dr. and Mrs. Zurcher, Miss Undritz, and Dr. and Mrs. Posse.*

**Credit Cards Help Finance Christian Education**

Southern College and Oakwood College recently joined with many other leading American colleges and universities in offering a specially designed MasterCard and Visa to raise funds to support higher education. More than \$130,000 could come to the colleges each year if enough Adventists in the Southern Union participate. This exciting idea will cost church members nothing and will also offer them health-related benefits.

The credit card program comes to the colleges from Florida Hospital where Des Cummings, Jr., executive

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vice president, conceived the first such program in the nation between a hospital and a bank. Through this program, developed in cooperation with Sun Bank, credit card applications were mailed to more than 180,000 individuals associated with Florida Hospital. Because of the positive response, the hospital has helped extend the program to include Southern and Oakwood colleges.

The program is very simple. Each time the holder of the special MasterCard or VISA credit card uses the card, the institution receives a donation. Under the arrangement negotiated with Sun Bank, the colleges will receive 10 cents every time the card is used, regardless of the amount of the purchase. In addition, the colleges receive \$7 of the \$21 annual fee.

Church members can choose either a Southern College or an Oakwood College MasterCard or VISA card. The presidents of both colleges promise that the income from this program will be used for scholarships to directly benefit Adventist students.

To get an idea of the potential of this program, an

estimate of 10,000 cards in use an average of four to five times per month could generate \$60,000 per year. The \$7 donation fee from the annual membership fee would generate an additional \$70,000.

Benjamin Reaves, president of Oakwood College, calculates that the estimate of 10,000 potential users is realistic. He says, "If even one out of every three credit card users selects ours, we could generate \$130,000 annually to support Christian education."

The credit cards also have some personal benefits for the cardholders. Various national, regional, and local vendors offer cardholder discounts for services and products. For example, one chain offers a savings on eyeglasses, and more than 60 pharmacies in central Florida give discounts on prescription drugs if the card is used.

The special credit cards will be honored worldwide anywhere regular MasterCard or VISA is recognized. Those who qualify for the MasterCard or VISA credit card also receive travel accident insurance, instant cash 24 hours a day at automatic teller machines, accidental death credit insurance, and free convenience checks. But the real advantage of this program is its potential to fund scholarship programs for Adventist colleges.—From an article by Kent Seltman in the October 1987 *Southern Tidings*. □

the 19th century.

## New Ideas Needed

Adventism desperately needs fresh ideas about the purpose of agricultural education and the role of the school farm if these entities are to be meaningful in the 1980s. Otherwise such programs will remain in the stagnant backwaters of Adventist education. They will contribute little to either the functioning of the schools or the mission of the church. If this happens, perhaps not much will be lost if schools sell their farms.

How can we solve this corporate guilt/unlimited opportunity dilemma? A closer look at the context of Mrs. White's counsel may offer some insight.

When Ellen White penned her counsel on agriculture in the curriculum she was largely seeking to make Adventist education practical. She desired that every graduate would have adequate means of self-support after leaving school, even if that support might only be used as an emergency measure for times of crisis.<sup>17</sup> She was quite correct when she wrote in 1894 that "this country [Australia] needs educated farmers."<sup>18</sup> The same could have been said about the United States and many other de-

veloping nations in the 1890s.

## Agriculture in the 1890s

At that time agricultural education was relevant and useful for almost everyone. In many places land was almost free, and all a person needed to begin was a horse and plow. Success resulted from putting as much land under cultivation as possible.

As a result of Mrs. White's counsel, Adventist colleges and secondary schools settled on large

tracts of land where they established dairy herds and cultivated extensive acreage—often in single crops such as corn or wheat—for a cash market. In doing this they prepared young people both to establish themselves in their own country and to enter primitive mission fields as largely self-supporting missionaries who could teach their low-technology agriculture techniques to the indigenous peoples.

In other words, Adventist agricultural programs in the late 19th and early 20th century were inherently practical. Since these procedures fulfilled their objectives and harmonized with Mrs. White's counsels, Adventist schools have often felt obliged to continue the same programs into the last quarter of the 20th century.

## Avoiding a Slavish Faithfulness

I believe that this slavish faithfulness to Adventist agricultural tradition is a serious problem. Many SDA agricultural programs are no longer as functional in preparing students either for the practical world of work or in furthering the mission of the church. As a result, many educational and conference administrators rightly question the value of such programs. But what can they do? After

## TAXPAYERS with dependents

### HERE'S A TAX TIP:

Beginning with your 1987 income tax return that you will file in 1988, you generally must list social security numbers for dependents who are at least five years old by the end of 1987. If any of your dependents do not have this number, get an application form today from the Social Security office in your area.

