



# Expanding, Upgrading, and Witnessing

By Shozo Tabuchi

**A**dventist education in the Far Eastern Division has made great strides during the past five years. Despite the unique challenges raised by political and economic problems, each country, colony, and island met the challenge of expanding the church's educational philosophy and program, which seek to restore the image of the Creator through the character development of our students.

Conducting Christian education in some 15 countries of various sizes and strengths presents us with complex problems. To maximize productivity throughout the vast field of the Far Eastern Division we have divided the areas into three zones. The northern zone includes Japan, Korea,

Taiwan, and Hong Kong/Macau and Bangladesh. The Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Guam-Micronesia form the central zone. Indonesia, the largest country in the division, plus Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar (Burma) form the southern zone.

In 1985 our division acquired three new union missions: Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. These formerly belonged to the Southern Asia Division. This addition and expansion of territory has posed new challenges. A search for new resources and effective models has been underway so that churches in politically, economically, and ecologically stressed countries can make greater strides in promoting Adventist education.

## ***New Campuses and Buildings***

Five new campuses have recently been completed or are under construction. Among these perhaps the most exciting development is in the Philippines. The entire campus at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, formerly called the SDA Theological Seminary Far East, is being newly constructed. This institution will provide a powerful agency for training workers and teachers. In addition, a new mission college is under construction in Thailand, Mt. Klabat College in Indonesia has added a cafeteria, and twin administration buildings were built at Indonesia Union College. Both colleges are in the process of completing their new auditoriums, which have a seating capacity of 1,600 people.

More than 70 new buildings of various sizes were added to the division's educational system during the past five years. These included some large buildings that will take care of 500-2,000 students, such as the new library combination/student center building erected at Korean Sahn-yook University. This library is one of the largest of any of our colleges

*Mahayag SDA Elementary School won second place in the 1988 Operation Beautify contest sponsored by the South Philippine Union Mission.*

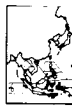
and universities. The academies in West Java, Jakarta, East Java, Manado, Nusa Tenggara, Sarawak, and Sabah added classrooms, science labs, or administration buildings. Plans are presently underway to operate four-year degree programs in Sri Lanka, North Sumatra, Indonesia, and Bangladesh.

#### ***Academic Accreditation***

More than a dozen colleges added new programs. The nursing program at Saniku Gakuin College in Japan received government accreditation. Korean Sahmyook University, which has a student body of more than 2,000, added three graduate degree programs in pharmacology, Christian education, and theology, all of which were approved by the Korean Government.

#### ***Faculty Upgrading***

The Far Eastern Division, with its U.S. \$600,000 teacher upgrading fund provided more than 70 doctors and 200 teachers with funding for a Master's degree during the past three years. For the first time in 25 years,



*Outreach programs by Far Eastern Division academies result in many hundreds of baptisms each year.*

Myanmar Union Mission was able to send three faculty members to obtain Master's degrees in the Philippines. Two more families will be leaving the country for further study. The other three colleges in Indonesia and Singapore are planning to send their faculty members for Doctoral upgrading, while the academies are improving their quality of instruction by sending more teachers for Master's degree studies.

#### **Use of Denominational Books**

International Bible textbooks have been translated into Indonesian and most of the students are using them. The students from Malaysia, Singapore, and Myanmar are using Bible textbooks printed in Australia and India.

#### **Youth Activities**

The campus evangelism fund, given by the division and the unions, has supported various evangelistic activities such as campus crusades,

and public and personal evangelism. The two colleges in Indonesia annually baptize an average of 30 persons on campus, and 60 off campus. The union director of education for the East Indonesia Union Mission, assisted by teachers, held evangelistic activities at least once a year, and baptized about 90 people annually. The master plan of West and East Indonesia unions includes the holding of public evangelistic campaigns by each academy. Most of the teachers and students are involved in various evangelistic activities. During the past five years, the directors of education conducted evangelistic crusades in various countries, which resulted in 600 baptisms.

College and academy students in industrialized countries are expressing in a tangible way their interest in the needs of education institutions in developing countries. Students from Japan, Korea, and Singapore have been actively involved with building projects in the countries to the south

where funds are limited. Such interaction generates a spirit of cooperation and brotherly love. Nearly 15 churches and schools have been constructed by student labor with the funds raised by the students.

#### **Challenges**

1. Retaining a distinctive program that focuses on educational mission as described by the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy is one of the greatest challenges facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Far Eastern Division. Many programs are competing for a central place on the stage of Adventist education. A number of these programs are perceived as a potential asset to the schools. However, they often spend the energies of our schools without producing positive results described in the Spirit of Prophecy.

2. The tremendous rate of church growth has made it difficult to provide adequate classroom space and new schools to educate the youth.

3. New believers often lack commitment to Seventh-day Adventist education and have difficulty understanding the benefits of building schools and paying tuition. Every church member must be orientated to understand the relationship between Adventist education and the commitment of future generations to the church.

4. The church must study the formula for the support of Seventh-day Adventist education. Many factors should be considered. Are our schools in financial difficulty because tuition costs have exceeded the ability of the membership to pay? Or are members less committed to budgeting their income for funding Adventist education? What if both of these statements are true? To help alleviate the problem, schools must develop means of generating funds other than tuition and appropriation monies.

### ***Conclusion***

Some Far Eastern Division schools are meeting the above challenges well. With God's blessings and guidance the Seventh-day Adventist education system was established and continues today. As the church maintains the distinctive characteristics of Adventist education, we can be assured of a bright future for our schools. □