

# South American Division

## *Growth Times Five*

**I**n the past quinquennium, education in the South American Division has made remarkable progress, for which we thank God and our teachers, administrators, parents, and students.

Five specific areas will be highlighted in this report: spiritual issues; advances in elementary, secondary, and higher education; and other achievements.

### **Spiritual**

During the past quinquennium, our education directors, with help from local churches and conferences, became highly involved with Global Mission. As a result, 52 new schools opened in Global Mission priority areas. The schools, academies, and colleges also established more than 100 new congregations and churches, approximately 70 of which were also in

Global Mission priority areas. To support these congregations, an adult textbook, *Cartilha Adventista*, was published and 111 courses were held. Schools and academies distributed 2,753,000 letters and tracts as a mission outreach program. Schools in Brazil are contributing the equivalent of U.S. \$9,300 per month in support of the *It Is Written* broadcasts throughout their country. South American schools also witness to their own students. Between 1990 and 1994, 25,2730 students were baptized.

### **Elementary Education**

The church's education system in South America had its beginnings in a humble school in 1893 in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. This first Adventist school was opened near Estacion Sola. From this modest beginning, the work of education in Argentina has expanded enormously. The centennial celebrations in 1993 featured many festivals, congresses, and special programs. Today, there are five academies and one university in Argentina, in addition to scores of elementary schools. The church challenged itself to open 100 elementary, secondary, and tertiary schools during

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Roberto C. Azevedo

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*South São Paulo Conference education director speaks at a Brazil school that was established as the result of a Global Mission project.*

the 1993-1994 anniversary year. With God's blessing, 111 new schools were opened. The School of Medicine at River Plate Adventist University was the high point of this "Pioneers Campaign."

Of the 142,894 pupils\* enrolled in our elementary schools in 1994, one of the most significant statistics was a 12 percent increase in Adventist students, who now total 46,130.\* The number of volumes in the elementary libraries also nearly doubled, reaching almost half a million books. This represents an outstanding improvement in the opportunities for our students.

### **Secondary Education**

The number of secondary schools in our division increased 35 percent during the past five years. Thirty-five new schools opened, including three boarding academies: one near the Brazilian Amazonic jungle (West Amazonic Adventist Institute) in 1992; one in the province of Minas Gerais, Brazil (Mina Gerais Adventist Institute) in 1994; and one in eastern Paraguay (East Paraguay Adventist School) in 1995. The East Paraguay school is the first boarding academy in Paraguay.

Just as elementary school enrollment has increased, the number of Adventist students in secondary education also increased, by 19.6 percent. The number of volumes in our secondary school libraries has grown by 91 percent.

We wish to express special thanks to the world church for the 13th Sabbath offerings, which have helped us establish many new buildings; the Korean Union, for supporting many students who came to help in our schools; and ADRA Sweden, for aid in constructing new buildings for the Trans-Amazonic Adventist Institute.

### **Colleges and Universities**

The most significant enrollment growth of the three educational levels occurred at the tertiary level, with a 44 percent increase in Adventist students. We would like to see greater growth in the number of volumes in our libraries. However, we are pleased with the 33.7 percent increase.

Educational growth at the tertiary level in the South American Division has been highlighted by the establishment of three universities: Chile

\*School opening report statistics.

Adventist University, 1990; River Plate Adventist University (Argentina), 1991; and Bolivia Adventist University, 1991. The upgrading and establishment of these universities will provide many new opportunities for the youth of South America.

On March 7, 1993, in the presence of the Argentinian president, Dr. Saul Menam, the school of medicine at River Plate Adventist University opened. This is the third school of medicine operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide.

Graduate degrees have been introduced in Chile, Argentina, and Brazil during this past quinquennium.

We wish to express our deep thanks to the Golden Cross and Chan Shun organizations for their continued support of the Brazil College Central Campus. We pray that God will continue to bless the construction of this new campus in the years ahead.

### **Other Achievements**

It was a privilege to establish a branch of the Geoscience Research Institute on the campus of River Plate Adventist University, which will serve as a consolidating factor in the teaching of creationism in our schools

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throughout the division. One of the significant outreach programs of GRI has been the Encounter program held in Brazil during 1994.

The division curriculum department has just published religious education books in both Spanish and Portuguese for all elementary and secondary schools. Coordination of textbooks in our divisional languages has been a significant challenge, so we are pleased to be nearing the one million volume mark in publication. Sales of these books has reached nearly U.S. \$2 million.

The first creationist textbook has also now been completed and printed, and has received a number of recognitions in the national press and among many scientists.

The education program in Brazil has focused on public advertising, both on national TV and many billboards. This has been a tremendous advantage in the development and establishment of schools throughout the country.

The South American Division education department has developed a plan focusing on the establishment of at least 250 new schools in the next 10-year period. As a result, there will be one or more schools in every district of 100,000 population throughout the eight countries of the division.

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*Brazilian student holds up her anti-smoking poster.*

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*São Paulo, Brazil, students participate in a parade float featuring the countries of the world.*

The plan also calls for the expansion and development of academies, colleges, and universities. As we set out to accomplish this new thrust for the

next quinquennium, we have faith that God will bless as He has in the past.—*Roberto C. Azevedo, Director of Education, South American Division.*

## Conversion of a Non-Adventist Teacher in Brazil

**B**ecause of an urgent need for teachers, Marcos Aristides Santana, a member of another church, was employed to teach at the Londrina Adventist Academy, in northern Parana, Brazil. Marcos soon began to appreciate our education system and philosophy. Worship with colleagues and with students, the example of teachers, and the spirit shown by the students all had a positive influence on him, and he decided to join the SDA Church.

At his baptism, which occurred at the end of 1994, he was surprised by the school choir, which came to honor him in his decision for Christ. When

he received his baptismal certificate from Teacher Mariene Annie Gruber, who had given him Bible studies, she asked him to tell what had led him to his decision. He testified that his conversion had resulted from the influence of the daily living of teachers and students.

Since then, Marcos' sister has been baptized, and a cousin and aunt are receiving Bible studies. He has given his parents a subscription to the *Revisita Adventista*.

We praise God for the Christian witness of those working in the educational area.—*Valter A. de Souza, Superintendent of Education, North Parana Conference.*