

# Trans-European Division

## *Energy, Vision, and a Sense of Mission*

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Orville Woolford

**A** Teacher Sent From God . . .” was the rallying theme of the Trans-European Division Education Department during the past quinquennium. We thus emphasized that the Adventist teacher is a key resource in education, and focused our efforts on enhancing teacher performance and ensuring that classroom methods, curriculum, and mission all have the stamp of divine excellence. We owe a great debt of gratitude to all our dedicated teachers, who zealously continue to pursue these high ideals.

Accordingly, the division held two major education conventions for teachers, workshops for dormitory deans and for Bible teachers, and hosted the GC-organized Institute for Christian Teaching in our division in 1994. All these were reinforced by

union-organized events, which helped reduce feelings of isolation that result from the distribution of our schools and the geography of our territory.

**T**he Trans-European Division's 95 schools are spread over 14 countries, each with its own language and unique culture.

Many of our primary schools are therefore one- or two-teacher schools. Nevertheless, irrespective of size, the schools try to make a difference in the lives of their pupils and in the community around them. They seek to communicate traditional values, discipline, and a sense of purpose and mission. For example, Tohkar Niaz Baig School is one of those engaged in a Community Service and Help Yourself Project. In churches and in the community, the students perform short plays dramatizing the gospel, the birth of Christ, or values like cleanliness. Their teachers then give short talks supporting the

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*Morning worship and flag raising at Pakistan Adventist Seminary, Farooqabad Mandi, Pakistan.*

plays. Thus they witness to their faith, and by selling food at these events, raise funds to help the school.

Our total school enrollment has risen, and the percentage of SDA stu-

dents, which had been dropping, has increased. A major challenge of the coming quinquennium will be to continue these trends. Already we are marketing SDA education among our church members in order to solve this problem.

The large number of students from non-SDA homes means that many of our schools are challenged to be mission stations. Many are doing so very successfully. For example, at our Ekebyholm school in Sweden last spring two girls, Rani and Linda, were baptized. They both found Jesus as their personal Saviour while at the school, and are now serving the church in different capacities.

The increased number of elementary schools in our division has been one of our most positive evidences of progress. This growth has occurred mainly in Pakistan, heightening more fully the need there to implement the division curriculum development program that was initiated during this quinquennium. Efforts to develop Christian curricula have also begun in Britain, Norway, Denmark, and Finland. The Pakistan Union has already produced, with the aid of funds through ADRA Sweden, the first Urdu classroom resource materials with a Christian faith perspective. However, this work needs to be stepped up to meet the challenge of our fast-growing school population in this largely Moslem country.

Our secondary schools and junior colleges continue to be a vital part in the life and witness of the church in their respective countries. Although the period has seen dropping enrollment in several of these schools, the ethos continues to exert a strong influence.

**A**n interesting example is the case of Jenny Gordon, who applied to the Open University, England, to study to become a teacher. The course required her to do some practice teaching. She therefore approached the SDA school in London and was not only successful in gaining the placement, but her time spent at the school resulted in her receiving Bible studies from the headmaster. Last summer she was baptized.

Each year, graduation services continue to bring important persons into the school, many who are not of our faith and who voice their admiration for the work being done in our institutions.

Marusevec in Croatia. But professors Radisa Antic and Miroslav Pujic dared to dream of opening a new theological seminary in Yugoslavia.

Inflation was so high that prices literally changed from hour to hour, and thousands of people were left without work every day. But the professors' faith was so strong that it moved them to action. Searching for a building for the new seminary, they found one in attractive, peaceful surroundings. It had been built as a seminary for the Catholic Church. The building was for sale, but the price was astronomical. Days of prayer and hope followed, and appeals were sent to members in the country and abroad. In January 1993, the dream came true when the doors of Belgrade Theological Seminary opened for the first time. This school is an example of our schools' energy, vision, and sense of mission, especially in the new institutions. Already, through the efforts of their staff and students, Adventism has been brought to a previously unentered part of the city and a church has been raised up.

*Lecturers at the 1993 division education convention came from the General Conference, Loma Linda and Andrews universities, and England.*

We are delighted to have acquired facilities for new ministerial training seminaries in Belgrade, Hungary; and Budapest, Yugoslavia. In Yugoslavia, due to the ongoing war, their students could not train for the ministry at

Between 1990 and 1995, the growth and development of our senior college, Newbold, has been outstanding. It has now achieved accreditation by the U.K. Open University Validation Services, and, for the first time,

*Non-Adventist students at English language class, Warsaw, Poland.*

British degrees will be offered to its students. Newbold College reached its highest enrollment—384 students—in 1994, and its largest graduating class finished in 1993.

Another new development was the organization with Newbold College of a non-residential program in Riga, Latvia, to train ministers for the Baltic States. We now must nurture these new institutions and programs so they can meet the exciting challenges and opportunities in these regions.

**T**hrough the growth of the system, the personal testimonies of parents, the life choices of students, and the overall positive contribution to the church, Adventist education in our division continues to play a part in stimulating the forward march of the church. Our schools continue their commitment to the goal of preparing students for greater usefulness and service in this world and for the life to come. The average annual figure of 126 students baptized per year during the quinquennium is a small but significant final indicator of God's continued presence of redemptive power in our schools today. We praise God for the hope of even greater things in the years ahead.—*Orville Woolford, Director of Education, Trans-European Division.*

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*First SDA primary school in Latvia, located in Riga.*

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# Student Finds New Meaning in Life at Ekebyholm

**A**nswers to my prayers come almost too rapidly! Everything seems to go so well!" says Linda, who, after three years of study at Sweden's junior college, was baptized in the spring of 1944.

Linda had lived for 16 years as a neighbor to Ekebyholmsskolan. When it was time for academy studies, she decided to enroll there.

"Actually," she says, "I did not know anything about the school or about Adventists. I guess I had the usual prejudices about the people at Ekebyholm being somewhat strange, and preferring carrots as food! I hardly knew that ordinary people were admitted to study there. However, I was aware that the study climate was very good."

Most of all, Linda liked the short distance to school. That meant she could keep her horse. She had also made friends at Ekebyholm, and was attracted to the school life outside of classes.

Linda describes with expressive body language what Ekebyholm has meant to her: She remembers a very special morning devotional when a woman pastor told that she used to swear a lot but got help. And Linda decided, If she can, I can also. The pastor also told them that every person ought to say aloud to himself or herself, "I am a being loved by Jesus!" Linda pondered this for quite some

time before she dared to do it.

Linda describes her continuous spiritual growth during her years at the school. "Everything was for me a confirmation of ideas, longings, and thoughts that I had always had. So coming to Ekebyholm meant coming alive!"

At the beginning of her third semester, Linda decided to be baptized. She kept it a secret for a time. But at the week of prayer, she felt strongly that she should be baptized right away. She even invited a non-Christian friend to her baptism.

But Linda's mother reacted very negatively, so she decided to wait. However, on a Friday night a few days before her graduation, Linda was baptized as a confirmation that her three years at Ekebyholmsskolan had been life-changing.

The following semester, Linda enrolled in the one-year seminary program offered by the school. Today she is the "voice" of the church as the receptionist at the Swedish Union office.

The night when Linda was baptized was a special evening at the school, not only because one of the "neighbors" was baptized, but also because one of Linda's classmates, a day student with a Buddhist mother, had made the same decision after 12 years at Ekebyholmsskolan. Today Linda's friend is a student missionary in Brazil.—*Ulf Gustavsson, Principal, Ekebyholmsskolan.*