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Adventists in Poland Plan Internet Home-School Program

A plan to establish an experimental Internet education program for home-schooling has been welcomed by Poland's Ministry of Education, according to Seventh-day Adventist Church sources in Poland. Endorsed by the Polish Adventist Church, a self-supporting foundation was established to prepare and operate an open learning education method based on the Internet. The venture will aim to reach Polish-speaking children in the country itself and abroad.

Joe Smoczynski, a businessman and initiator of the project, says the new venture represents a partnership between a self-supporting ministry run

by the Adventist Theological Seminary in Podkowa Lesna, the local church, and the Christian Internet site, Service Hope.

"Our contacts with the Ministry of Education officials have been very encouraging in these early stages of making this project happen," he says. "The church has many talented educators and teachers who will be involved in preparation of the curriculum, new teaching methodology, and related issues."

This open learning system is based on significant parental involvement. The new program will provide the administration, structure, techniques, material, and teacher involvement in order for parents to guide their children through the compulsory educational years.

In its initial stages, the new school will offer a program for the first three grades of a K-12 schooling. "We hope to be ready in a couple of years, but the initial stages of creating the project are behind us," says Smoczynski.

Educators behind the project say the program will provide a solution for parents who are committed to their children's education but are in circumstances where they need to stay at home.

Wladyslaw Polok, president of the Polish Adventist Church, says the combination of the church's 100-year-old tradition of home-schooling and modern technology "will bring us in the forefront of compulsory education in Poland." He says the project will benefit many sections of society, including the thousands of Polish families living abroad, such as diplomats.

"Our Christian-based open learning method is

going to be the leader showing the standards by which students should be assessed," adds Polok.

The school will offer its program to everyone, but will be based on principles of Adventist education, says Dr. Zdzislaw Ples, rector of the Adventist Seminary in Podkowa, Lesna.

"By using the Internet, we can monitor the progress of the children through custom-written software and therefore instruct and guide parents in a way that the government standards are met," he says.

"As a parent of four children and two grandchildren, but also as a teacher and minister, I am glad that we in Poland are setting up an educational program that emphasizes our Adventist values of character building," he says. "The Ministry of Education is supporting us wholeheartedly in this project."

The school is expected to be directly registered with the Ministry of Education as an experimental program. The ministry officials have asked the foundation to provide the required documentation for formal approval of the new school. Virtually all schools are registered in the local district or county. It is rare for permission to be granted for an experimental school with a standard government education grant. The organizers say that since they are an Internet school for compulsory education, they cannot register in the district or county because they do not fulfill the local legal educational requirements.

For more information about the Internet site Service Hope, go to: <http://www.nadzieja.pl/>. — Source: Adventist News Network. ✍



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