



New Freedoms and Challenges

BY HERIBERTO C. MULLER

Geographically, the Euro-Asia Division (ESD) is the largest Adventist division territory in the world, stretching across 11 time zones and 12 countries from Eastern Europe to the Pacific Ocean.

ESD's territory includes all of the former Soviet countries except the three Baltic nations. Current church membership is more than 150,000, making it one

of the smallest divisions in the world church. However, it has grown significantly since 1990, when its membership was about 36,000.

The fall of Communism brought new personal and religious freedoms to ESD, but it also brought political chaos, militant nationalism, growing materialism, economic hardship, and the conviction that the state is responsible for providing education.

The challenge for the church in this

uncertain environment is to grow healthy and strong and to design an educational system that provides "an education that is as high as heaven and as broad as the universe; an education that cannot be completed in this life, but that will be continued in the life to come; an education that secures to the successful student his passport from the preparatory school of earth to the higher grade, the school above" (Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 19).



Graduation, Ukrainian College of Arts and Sciences. Bucha, Kiev Region, Ukraine.



The Heritage School in Tokmak City, Kyrgyzstan, is unique among Adventist elementary schools. In operation for only eight years, it has 121 students, 60 percent of whom are from Muslim families. More than 50 people have been baptized as the result of school missionary work.

Accomplishments

Here are ESD's main accomplishments in the area of education during the present quinquennium:

1. Transferring the administrative responsibility of Russian Sahmyook University on Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk Island from the Northern Asia-Pacific Division to the Euro-Asia Division (East Russian Union).
2. Upgrading Zaoksky Theological Seminary to Zaoksky Adventist University.

3. Building two projects funded by the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering:
 - a. A multi-purpose building at Zaoksky Adventist University (2001);
 - b. A women's dormitory at Ukrainian Institute of Arts and Sciences (2004).
4. Offering a Master of Sciences in Administration (International Development Program) in partnership with Andrews University (Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A.) for ESD church administrators, ADRA workers, and teachers (July 2003-April 2005).

5. Approval for a Master of Public Health program sponsored by Loma Linda University (Loma Linda, California, U.S.A.), which will commence in August 2005 at Zaoksky Adventist University with 90 pastors and health professionals enrolled.

6. Preparation of an education policy book for use throughout the division.

7. Offering a training seminar (August 2003) for primary and secondary teachers on "The Philosophy of the Christian Education and Faith and Learning Integration" with Raul Lorenzo and Ines Posse as presenters.

8. The opening of two more English Language Centers in Georgia, making seven in all.

Zaoksky Adventist University

In January 1987, the church received a plot of land of approximately two acres in the village of Zaoksky, Tula Region, near Moscow. The parcel included an old school building partly destroyed by fire. The local villagers were using the gutted building as a garbage dump.

A Bachelor of Arts degree in religion was the first course of study offered, to prepare young people for ministry in the vast territory of the Euro-Asia Division. A program of agriculture directed by Ja-



In 2004, the tertiary institution on the island of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russia, came under the jurisdiction of the Euro-Asia Division. Russian Sahmyook University offers programs in linguistics and music.

cob Mittleider was also established, leading to a certificate program. In 1990, the Committee of Religious Affairs of the Soviet Union gave Zaoksky official registration as a full-time institution of higher education.

In the past quinquennium, the following degree programs have been added: M.A. in music (2000); B.A. in economics (2003); B.A.'s in social work, secondary English education, and accounting (2004); and A.S. degrees in office management and jurisprudence (2004).

Among the most significant changes for Zaoksky was recognition from the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation. In 2003, the ministry granted the License of the Right of Educational Activities, the first of a two-part accreditation process. To satisfy the government requirements, three separate institutions were created.

Today, the campus houses five educational institutions: Zaoksky Theological Seminary, Zaoksky Christian Institute of Arts and Sciences, Zaoksky Christian Professional College, Zaoksky Seventh-day Adventist School (K-11), and the Mittleider-Agro Study Center. The university also provides pastoral education through extension schools in seven locations throughout the ESD.

Three hundred students live on campus; 736 attend classes in extension schools; 43 are studying for the M.A. in religion through Andrews University; and 90 are preparing for a M.P.H. through Loma Linda University. A new classroom building completed in 2004 enables Zaoksky to accommodate 1,000 on-campus students, but the school cannot increase its enrollment without addi-

tional housing. Plans are in place to build a new men's dormitory and additional married student housing. The master plan also calls for adding the following degree programs: Doctor of Ministry, M.A.'s in economics, social work, and business administration; B.A.'s in social work, philology (English), journalism, and law; A.S. degrees in nursing, youth education, home management, in-



Music students, Russian Sahmyook University.



Computer lab, Ukrainian Institute of Arts and Sciences.



Entrance to Ukrainian College of Arts and Sciences.

formation processing and management, economics and accounting, elementary education, and choir conducting.

Recent years have seen a significant change in the attitude of government officials and local villagers toward Zaoksky Adventist University. Non-members pay tuition to send their children to the Adventist elementary school. The mayor of the Zaoksky Region regularly visits campus and supports the development of the university. The director of the local hospital welcomes the addition of a nursing program that will benefit the village. The orphanages in the Tula Region have opened their doors to student ministry groups.

Ukrainian Institute of Arts and Sciences

Ukrainian Institute of Arts and Sciences (UIAS) is the church's first tertiary institution in the Ukraine. This professionally oriented institute, which opened in Bucha, Kiev Region, in October 1999, offers five-year undergraduate degrees, with emphases in English, business management, finances, and marketing. Its campus is also used as a training center for distance education. UIAS operates special summer/winter programs in the study of Slavic (Ukrainian, Russian) languages and culture.

At present, the school has 625 students in four departments. The student body is comprised of students from Ukraine, Turkmenistan (a Muslim country), Moldavia, Belarus, Russia, Armenia, Georgia, and Rumania.

In June 2003, the institute graduated its first class of 49 students, who were awarded Bachelor's degrees.

In June 2004, the Ukraine Ministry of Education and Science gave approval for a Bachelor's degree in marketing.

In June 2004, UIAS graduated 96 students (52 Bachelor's and 44 Master's), each of whom received a State Standard Certificate. UIAS is the first Adventist ed-

ucational institution in the Ukraine to receive state accreditation. Officials and students consider this to be a clear indication of God's blessing in this former Soviet territory.

Now, the institute is in the process of receiving state accreditation for its Master's degrees in the rest of the specialties. An Adventist international accrediting committee has also approved its status as a graduate-level institution.

Between 2000 and 2005, the institute grew from 90 to 625 students and significantly increased the number of volumes in its library.

The Institute Student Church also continues to grow, with new people being baptized and joining our Christian family. Last November, the institute held a revival week that finished with a baptism. In early 2005, another six students were baptized.

Russian Sahmyook University

In 1992, a new university opened on the island of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russia. It was founded by the South Korean Union and the Western Siberian Mission. In 2004, the university came under the jurisdiction of the Euro-Asia Division. Its student body is international, with students from Korea, China, and Vietnam. Subjects are taught in several languages.

Russian Sahmyook University now has two departments: music and linguistics. Its linguistics specialists are in great demand in the new social and economic situation. These students master two

languages, study theory and practice translation, and learn to use their knowledge in different fields, such as politics, culture, economics, and law.

The music department trains students to play the piano and stringed orchestra instruments. It has a contract with the Academy of Music in St. Petersburg, which was named in honor of Rimsky-Korsakov.

Conclusion

The ESD Education Department is working on a strategy to provide stability to a church that faced almost 80 years of oppression and suffering as a result of a lack of freedom.

The activities for the next five years



Zaoksky Adventist University, Tula Region, Russian Federation.

will focus on the following:

1. Making members aware of the importance of Christian education.
2. Starting one new school in each mission and conference in the division.
3. Helping each union establish a higher education institution in its territory.

I would like to thank Mario Veloso, who served us the education director for our division the first two years of this period (2000-2002), as well as the union and division administrators, for their support. May the Lord provide guidance and blessings as we seek to provide

for the education for His church in the huge territory of the ESD. /



Heriberto C. Muller
is Director of Education for the Euro-Asia Division in Moscow, Russia.