



SUD

## Making Grace Known Through Adventist Education

BY G. NAGESHWAR RAO

**S**urat! At the mention of the name, varied images flood the mind. A little Indian fishing village on the northwestern coast of India. The gateway for a merchant boat from England, an opening wedge to the British Empire. A crucial flagpost in modern India's struggle for freedom. And currently, a textile hub and the world's premier center for diamond cutting and polishing.

But today, the city is also known for another kind of diamond work—cutting, shaping, and polishing young lives in a location where the flag of Adventist education is flying high. Each day, nearly 6,500 young people—from toddlers to graduate students—from all parts of the metropolis, representing all religions and social strata, flow through the portals of this Adventist educa-

tional center, to be shaped, molded, patterned, and polished—from the raw material of childhood innocence and teenage dreams into mature and dynamic young people, transformed to change society, to lead the community, and to achieve great things. Adventist education is the tool, dedicated teachers are the means, a committed administration is the motivating power that has made a one-room, one-teacher institution of 70 years ago into a dynamic center of education—for the glory of God and for the good of the community.

Until Surat's tertiary program took shape in 1998, the Southern Asia Division (SUD) had only one higher education institution, Spicer Memorial College in Pune, India. The tradition and the historic rooting of Adventism symbolized by Spicer has linked with the dreams of the new and the challenge of the unknown

symbolized by Surat to produce nine tertiary institutions throughout Southern Asia. The advancement in tertiary education to meet the increasing educational and leadership needs of a growing constituency is a reminder of what God began—small in the long ago—and what He will conclude in the near future.

### Higher Education

This development of the tertiary program is SUD's single most important educational achievement in the current quinquennium. Adventist colleges are strategically positioned to serve the growing field.

Spicer Memorial College continues to be the flagship institution, developing pastors, teachers, and other workers for the division. Surat Adventist College, with branch campuses in Nuzvid in the East Central India Union Section and in Ranchi, Northern India Union Section, offers specialized training in nursing, health care, and in business leadership. Roorkee Adventist College, which serves the Northern India Union Section, trains teachers and accountants. Northeast Adventist College, located amidst the beautiful foothills of the Himalayas, serves young people from the Northeast India Union Section. Down on the east coast is the Flaiz Memorial Adventist College, which offers varied courses in arts and commerce. Vellore Adventist College of Education, the youngest of the colleges, trains certified teachers for elementary and secondary schools throughout the division. Lowry Adventist College, the cradle of Adventist higher education, located in Bangalore, has a highly acclaimed nursing program, in addition to degrees in teaching and computer technology.

The nine Adventist colleges in the division enroll 3,873 students, taught by a highly qualified faculty of 441. Although some institutions have a

high percentage of non-Adventist students, the governing and administrative structure of the institutions ensure that the Adventist ethos prevails on the campuses, in the classrooms, and in the dormitories. The emphasis on Adventist lifestyle, the core Bible curriculum, and integration of faith and learning in all classes ensure that when students graduate, they have achieved not only academic excellence, but also spiritual and moral maturity. "I chose to teach here," said one teacher at Roorkee College to a recent church accrediting team, "because of the moral imperatives and spiritual nurture that are upheld."

**Education That Makes a Difference**

During the current quinquennium, elementary and secondary education also had a division-wide impact. From the tiny town of Banepa in Nepal to the bustling city of Nagercoil at the southern tip of India, SUD operates 262 elementary and secondary schools, most of which offer college-preparatory curricula. Almost 150,000 students, most of them from non-Adventist homes, are enrolled in these schools. Each child is a potential member of God's kingdom, and

that in itself justifies investing the church's time, funds, and human resources in education.

The surge in elementary and secondary education is typified by the Adventist Higher Secondary School in Ahmedabad, north of Surat. Just a few years ago, it was a small, struggling institution. But thanks to a strong spiritual and moral emphasis, a committed administration and staff who care for each child as if he

or she were the only person on the campus, the school has grown to become the largest school in the Southern Asia Division, with more than 8,500 students and sophisticated facilities.

Add to Ahmedabad such centers as Spicer Higher Secondary School and Hume McHenry Higher Secondary School in Pune, Seventh-day Adventist Higher Secondary School, Spencer Road, in Bangalore, Adventist Higher Secondary Schools in



Both Adventist and non-Adventist students take an active part in spiritual-life activities as here at the Adventist Higher Secondary School, Hosur, Tamil Nadu.



Graduation exercise at Roorkee Adventist College.

Pondicherry, Chennai, Madurai, Kuttapuzha, Secunderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow, Shillong, and many others, you have a modern chapter of faith reflected and patterned after Hebrews 11.

While the curriculum of these schools varies depending upon the region, a common thread of unity and spiritual nurture, of vision and purpose, binds all the schools. The integration of faith and learning provides a pervasive influence that bonds all classroom activities. The SUD Education Department, assisted by able administrative and teaching personnel throughout the division, provide continuous training and materials in order to ensure both academic excellence and spiritual nurture. The core



The ministry of Adventist schools is recognized and appreciated by the government and the public. One such acknowledgement was received by students from the chief minister of Pondicherry State in southern India.

Bible curriculum is followed by all schools and taught by men and women dedicated to values of nurture and faith development. Thus, Adventist schools are known and sought after for their philosophy of wholistic education—the training of the head, hand, and heart.

**Education’s Golden Rule**

Adventist schools in SUD operate in a largely non-Christian atmosphere, which means that our educators are often faced with a challenge similar to the one faced by children of Israel camped by the rivers of Babylon, who lamented, “How shall



Each student is precious to Adventist education, and each one is invited to become a member of God’s Kingdom.

we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” (Psalm 137:4, KJV). Fortunately, we have the guidance of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy: Love is the way to bring about wholistic education. During the current five-year period, the educational leadership of the church, from administration to teachers, has adopted a 10-step formula, implementing the golden rule of education in the way our schools are operated and our classrooms are managed. These steps are: (1) Be a role model; (2) be impartial; (3) lend a sympathetic ear; (4) be cheerful; (5) help the children to pray and trust in God; (6) instill right values; (7) win their confidence; (8) provide constructive criticism; (9) build self-esteem; and (10) be a faithful steward.

An education based on such positive values will certainly succeed. God has blessed our educational ministry in SUD. In the past five years, 3,960 people were brought into God’s kingdom through the ministry of our schools. Many more have come to know the meaning of a personal God. We have much to be thankful for. During the upcoming quinquennium, we are committed to making God’s grace known through the “nicest work” given to human beings—the work of education (see Ellen White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 73).



investiture service at Northeast Adventist College, Shillong.



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