



Encouraging News From Difficult Places

During this past quinquennium (2010-2015), Seventh-day Adventist education in the Trans-European Division (TED) achieved modest but significant progress in spite of numerous demanding challenges.

TED has the smallest membership of the 13 world divisions, yet is very diverse. It stretches from Greenland in the north through Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark); from Iceland in the west through the British Isles, Netherlands, Poland, and to the three Baltic countries in the east; southward to Hungary, the Adriatic countries, and all the way to Greece and Cyprus. The 204 million inhabitants of these territories live in secular, postmodern, Catholic, and Orthodox cultures and speak more than 20 official languages and numerous dialects.

Because the church reorganized the TED territory in 2012, the education

work in the Middle East is now under the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission (MENA); Sudan is under the East-Central Africa Division (ECD), and Pakistan is under the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD). We rejoice about their continuing success there, though as a result of the changes, we “lost” 42 institutions (38 percent) and 8,000 students (40 percent) from within the TED; thus, our education work is now significantly smaller.

Delivering Adventist education throughout the 22 countries of the TED is no small task. These countries are organized into 11 unions and three attached fields. Because of the cultural diversity, there is no unified recipe that will work everywhere. Administrators, educators, and students are committed to make sure that our educational system prepares people not only for useful service in the specific conditions of the country in which they live and work, but also for the larger world and the

world to come. Adventist education in the TED aims to provide excellent academic training and intellectual development, but also seeks to nurture spiritual growth and to provide students with a solid grounding to becoming fully committed followers of Jesus Christ. Thus, our schools continue to fulfill a key role in the life and witness of the Seventh-day Adventist Church throughout our division.

Difficult Odds

In achieving the lofty goals set for the division, our 68 elementary, secondary, and higher education institutions battle against almost overwhelming odds. High on the list of difficulties are the perennial problems of trying to attract paying students in countries with widely available free and government-subsidized education; declining birthrates; lack of church subsidies, difficulty in promoting and nurturing biblical standards and values in the midst of secular-

BY DANIEL DUDA

ism and post-Christian societies; lack of diversity in study options and majors; the difficulty of staffing institutions with godly, motivated, and qualified professionals; and the challenge of paying market wages to professionals in a time of global economic downturn. Small churches and unions with a few thousand members struggle to sustain secondary boarding schools. Yet, in spite of these daunting challenges, by the grace of God, our schools continue to prevail, celebrate success, and flourish in amazing and innovative ways.

Enrollment Gains

During the past quinquennium, we have seen a modest increase in the number of students enrolled in our schools. Because of the conditions, the gains have not been evenly spread

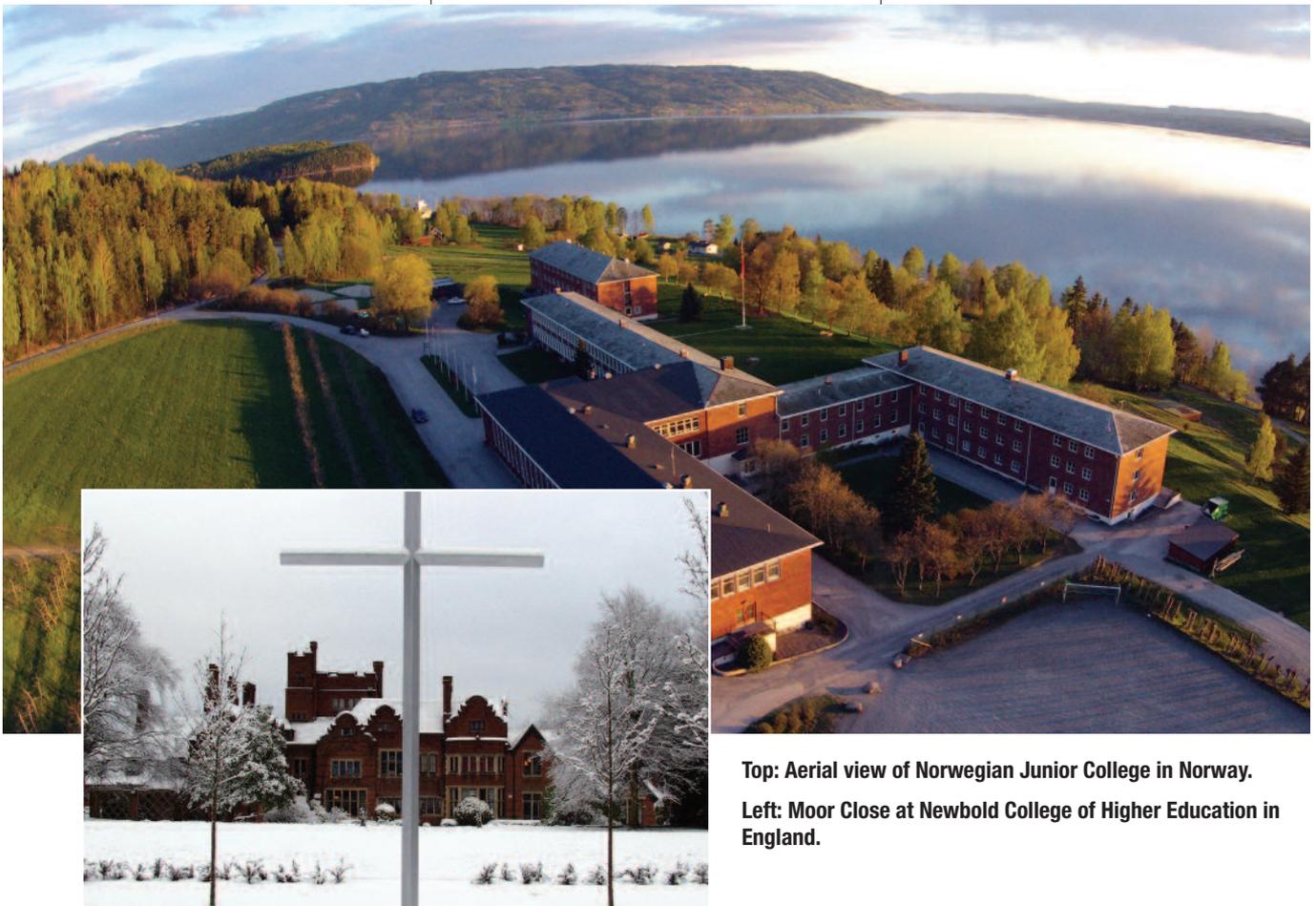
across the division. However, some schools have had outstanding success in attracting students. For example, in 2000, our Polish Spiritual Seminary in Podkowa Lesna had 15 full-time tertiary theology students. Today, renamed the Polish Senior College of Theology and Humanities, the college offers programs in five departments, with media and health promotion being the latest. The institution found a niche in the Polish educational market—incorporating Bible knowledge and Christian values—and is now the largest Adventist school in Europe! Although its current enrollment is down from 2010, it still can boast an impressive 7,127 percent increase since 2000!

The Friedensau Adventist University in Friedensau, Germany, is accrediting the M.A. program in theology at New-

bold College of Higher Education in Binfield, Bracknell, Berkshire, England, and also a part-time Master of Theological Studies at the Adriatic Union College in Maruševec, Croatia, where 30 pastors from Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia are earning a postgraduate degree that they would have difficulty obtaining elsewhere. We are truly thankful for this type of cross-divisional cooperation, as Newbold does not have its own degree-granting powers.

To illustrate the growth of our secondary schools, let me give the example of our school in Maruševec, Croatia, that has 200 students this year, in contrast with 126 in 2010—a 59 percent increase (located in a village of 6,700 people)!

However, mere numbers fail to reveal some exciting and important as-



Top: Aerial view of Norwegian Junior College in Norway.

Left: Moor Close at Newbold College of Higher Education in England.

pects of school life in TED. High on this list is the enthusiasm of students engaged in the life-changing educational experiences that are daily offered in our schools. To hear their testimonies, and to see the energy, vitality, and potential of children and youth, is always heart-warming for the visiting accrediting teams, church and school administrators, and teachers alike.

Higher Education Achievements

Newbold College of Higher Education, a few miles from London, England, is the TED's flagship tertiary institution. It went through a difficult restructuring period during the past quinquennium. Since 2012, Newbold has been a member of the Adventist Colleges Abroad consortium, which means that it benefits from a new influx of American students each year. Currently, the student numbers are 33 percent higher than during the 2013-2014 academic year and in 2011. A new program in Health and Wellness has been added in collaboration with the Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing Company in Australia. The Centre for Christian Leadership is providing short-term courses for members throughout Britain and beyond. A more formalized Leadership Program is planned for the future. The Department of Theological Studies, with 134 students, is the largest Adventist theology program in Europe. The college successfully passed the Quality Assurance Agency review, and the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities visit in 2014 proposed upgrading Newbold to a "Form B" institution, thus making it the first Adventist institution in Europe achieving this status.

In Croatia, Hungary, Poland, and Serbia, excellent work has been done in weekend classes and correspondence training of secondary-level religious-education teachers. These motivated and committed people attend intensive classes one weekend each month and ful-

fill their requirements through correspondence in order to earn their degrees.

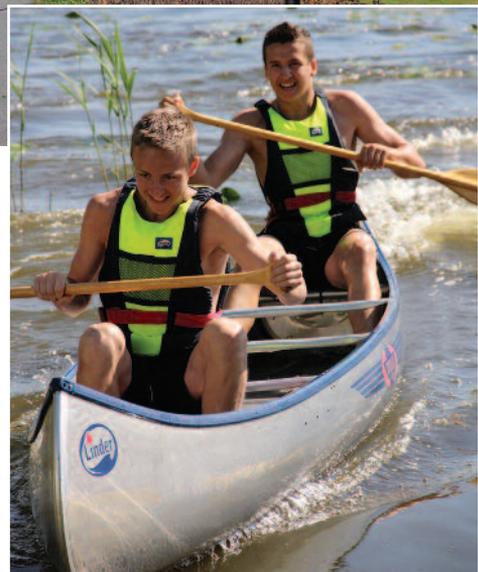
In Hungary and Serbia, our schools continue to have amazing success with the Bible Open University, where each book of the Bible is presented to the general public from the point of view of history, art, and literature. A great deal of interest has been generated by the work of our teachers, and as a result, a significant number of people have been baptized.

Major financial support was provided to enable students from economically challenged countries of the TED to attend Newbold College of Higher Education for ministerial training, as well as business education for church treasurers and financial workers. The



Top: Swedish Junior College (Ekebyholmsskolan) in Rimbo, Sweden.

Right: Ekebyholmsskolan students canoeing.



TED continues to invest significant resources into contract sponsorships (more than £138,000 yearly). In exchange for sponsorship, the students agree to work for the church for a number of years. In 2009, the TED also began to offer grants (£110,000 yearly) to help young people who would not otherwise have a chance to attend a Seventh-day Adventist educational institution to study areas other than theology. These students spend a year on the campus of an Adventist institution, where their lives are shaped intellectually, educationally, and spiritually. Two hundred young people benefitted from this plan during the past quinquen-



Members of the 2015 graduating class, Danish Junior College, Vejle, Denmark.

nium. Committing almost \$2 million in five years to helping young people attend an Adventist school shows the commitment of the TED to Adventist education.

In-Service Training for Educators

The success of our system relies on and is powered by our teachers' faith in God and their dedication to delivering high-quality education. The TED supports them by providing a variety of in-service training and nurturing events; for example, regional and division education conventions. Three biennial inter-division European theology teachers' conventions took place during this quinquennium (in Cernica, Romania; Beirut, Lebanon; and Bracknell, Berkshire, England). Each provided significant encouragement, networking, and professional development for the attendees—not only from the TED, but also from the EUD and ESD. All three European divisions jointly organized this event.

To support teacher development of mainly primary and secondary school teachers, the division held its quinquennial education convention in July 2014 in the beautiful Serbian town of Arandjelovac. More than 200 attendees

heard challenging presentations, lectures, and workshops that provided high-quality sessions during the convention.

Winning Students to Christ

Finally, while we rejoice in numerical growth, statistics reveal little about the dedication of faculty and staff who win many people to Christ through our schools. From Norway to Croatia, Adventist schools are igniting students' spiritual interests and aspirations and pointing them toward eternal realities. One indication of their success is that between 2010 and 2014, our schools accounted for 726 baptisms. While we give God the glory for this, we also acknowledge an enormous debt of gratitude to our 749 teachers who inspire the 5,437 students in our schools. We realize that for the future, the statistics may not increase as rapidly as in the past, as we have given up a significant number of schools to the MENA, ECD, and SSD, but we rejoice about every young person who commits his or her life to Jesus. All of these young people are precious in God's sight.

Since 2007, the TED has been running "Relay," the TED Institute of

Youth Evangelism. During the past quinquennium, 750 young people have taken part in 25 intensive annual two-week courses, which have been run in eight unions/countries. A diploma is earned at the end of each week and each course. Those who complete four courses (usually over two years) receive a certificate in Youth Evangelism. The TED in the past five years has invested £40,000 into 65 evangelistic projects that these trained young people have subsequently conducted in their local churches.

Because we believe that God "is just as willing to work with the efforts of His people now"¹ as He was in the past, we have experienced the fulfillment of the promise that "God will meet all [our] needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19, NIV).² Therefore, the team of educators in the TED seeks to maintain a burning passion for the mission of Adventist education. As followers of Christ, they have had their personal lives changed. As leaders, they embrace change in our institutions. As educators, they are the catalyst of change in our schools. They envision an even more exciting and challenging future as their work continues to deliver Adventist education through the grace and empowerment of our Lord Jesus Christ. ✍



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REFERENCES

1. Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1913), p. 554.
2. Scripture quotations credited to NIV are from The Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.