



# Growth and Challenges

By T. H. Nkungula

**S**eventh-day Adventist education in the Eastern Africa Division has experienced a remarkable growth, in terms of enrollment and, to some extent, facilities, during this past quinquennium. The overwhelming growth, however, has produced challenges that are a source of concern and debate among teachers, educational leaders, and parents. History will probably view 1985-1990 as a quinquennium of educational reform and serious challenges that produced a wave of reform, transforming Adventist education in this part of the world.

## **Growth**

Statistics show that the Eastern Africa Division's enrollment—primary, secondary, teacher training, and college/university—grew at a rate of more than 76 percent by the

(1985 - June 30, 1989). As more people—both adults and youth—came into the church there was increased demand for Adventist education. The newly converted parents have pushed for Christian education in their homelands, and so additional schools have been needed, particularly at the primary level.

The second factor that has led to this tremendous growth, is the drive by African governments to eradicate illiteracy. Communities have been encouraged to build schools, with governments supplying some of the building materials. The people provide the labor to build the classrooms. The government incentives have aroused great interest and a craving for formal education. As a result many schools have been established in communities where formal education was nonexistent before.

What does this have to do with Adventist education? Once a school has been built, some governments ask the people to choose a sponsor—an organization to operate the school. Many communities, though largely non-Adventist, have designated the Seventh-day Adventist Church as sponsor of their school(s). As a result, some churches and fields/conferences have been compelled to run many so-called "community schools" operated under the philosophy and objectives of Adventist education. In many such schools, about 50 percent or more of the students come from non-Adventist homes. Many of these students take their stand for the Lord before they leave the school. In the 1988-1989 school year, almost 10,000 baptisms in schools were reported, of which about 60 percent were students from non-Adventist homes.

One other factor is that youth problems of developed countries, which formerly seemed remote, are now descending on Africa at an alarming rate through news media and other channels. Many parents in Africa today—both Seventh-day Adventist and non-Seventh-day

end of the quinquennium. Several factors contributed to this impetus.

First the fact that, over this same period, the church growth had a net gain of 12.01 percent in membership



Adventist—are worried about the future of their children. Both groups view Adventist schools as “cities of refuge.” They believe that our teachers, who are committed and dedicated, and who do not smoke or drink alcohol can assist their children in character development.

Hence, many parents, both members and nonmembers, seek to enroll their children in our schools, particularly in the community schools. Perhaps this explains why in 1988-1989 more non-Adventist than Adventist students enrolled in our schools.

Our institutions of higher learning—Solusi College and the University of Eastern Africa—also showed significant enrollment increases during the past quinquennium. The enrollment at Solusi has increased by about 175 percent over the past five years, while limiting the number of non-Adventist students. In 1989, 31 students out of 273 were reported as non-Adventist—only about 11 percent of the student body. At the year-end board meeting, the University of Eastern Africa reported an enrollment of 603 students—a net gain of 59.7 percent over five years ago.

### **Challenges**

The unprecedented growth in enrollment and, to some extent, the improvement of facilities, have brought with them a host of challenges to the Eastern Africa Division educational system. The explosion in enrollment, for example, has brought to the fore problems that, prior to 1985, were only dimly perceived.

However, during the past quinquennium, these problems became the focus of debate in many educational seminars, conferences, and boards of education. Some of the issues are listed below:

#### ***Narrow secondary school programs***

During the past five years, we have held many educational seminars, conferences, and teachers' conventions where we reexamined the purpose of Adventist education. We have concluded that true Adventist education offers students a pathway to knowing God personally, and prepares them for active, successful, and responsible citizenship in this world and in the world to come.

However, looking at the program being offered, we found that it was too narrow, thereby condemning the

children to routinized, dead-end jobs. The education emphasized rote memory, failing to teach young people to think creatively or acquire practical skills needed in the world of work. We also realized that students, particularly those in high school, were skilled mostly in academic areas—reading, writing, and arithmetic—but were short on creativity and practical skills, and incapable of synthesizing new information. As a result, most of our secondary graduates were ill-prepared for either the world of work we know now, or to adjust to future changes in their environments.

Accordingly, during these seminars and conventions, we began to make serious recommendations about enriching and expanding the traditional curriculum, which was deeply rooted in the classics and emphasized academic subjects. The new programs would enable every student, regardless of mental capability or socio-economic status, to reach his or her potential.

If Adventist education is to play a significant role in helping to finish the Lord's work, and if Africa is to be free from pestilence, hunger, poverty,



and fear, our schools need to train scientists, business people, organizers, technicians, engineers, communicators, evangelists, builders, teachers, and planners.

In our education seminars, we recognized the need to change the Seventh-day Adventist education structure in our division. This involved getting teachers and local church education secretaries as well as parents, to actively participate in restructuring our schools, raising resources, and accepting responsibility for designing an environment that would meet student needs.

Serious efforts have already been made to integrate academic and practical subjects in a number of schools. For example, Solusi Adventist Secondary School, in Zimbabwe, is moving away from a purely academic program to an industrially orientated curriculum. The new program will allow students to spend 50 percent of their learning experiences in academic subjects, while the rest of their time will be devoted to practical subjects such as agriculture, motor mechanics, building construction, metalwork, and home economics.

Solusi Secondary School is not the only school moving in this direction. Other secondary schools are expanding and supplementing traditional curricula by integrating practical subjects. These include Rusangu Secondary School, Nyazura, Chimpenpe, Matandani, Ethiopia Adventist School, Makundi Vocational School, Pitsane Agricultural Training Centre, Ikizu, Bugema High School, and Kamagambo High School.

All these efforts, though humble, have occurred because educators and administrators realize that Adventist schools must offer both excellence and equity programs. Seventh-day Adventist education must inspire and prepare students, not only for a life of work, but also for a life of worth, which will enable them to support their families and their church, while at the same time helping to develop their communities.

#### ***Problems of teacher effectiveness and grass-roots participation***

The reform in this area will probably focus on human and social needs. Important issues will include giving teachers and local educators more latitude to plan and develop the program. This will enable young people to see the relevance of their learning to real life.

These changes demand that teach-

ers through research and experience, and in collaboration with local church education secretaries and parents, develop programs to improve the climate of the school. This will develop student creativity and critical-thinking skills. Further, teachers' new freedom and authority will enable them to establish stronger links between schools and the communities they serve. This should help solve the educational needs of a rapidly changing Africa.

Teachers and local church education secretaries in our division are well-informed about current trends in the job market. Jobs that were available a few years ago have become obsolete because of rapid changes in technology. Accordingly, educators and administrators are achieving a consensus on the need for appropriate and meaningful reform in the African schools as well as on the direction these changes must take.

Effective education reform can be successfully implemented only when the teacher feels that his or her profession is recognized and that authority is decentralized. This means that decisions about students' basic needs are made by teachers, who, by virtue of their training and years of experience, are best suited to assess these needs.

Eastern Africa Division teachers are also knowledgeable about educa-

tional research. More importantly though, they are the ones closest to the parents of the students. Teachers maintain constant contact with the community and work closely with Parent-Teacher Associations.

When teachers enjoy professional autonomy, they can work more successfully with the grass-roots constituency. As local educators team up with communities to improve schools, facilities are upgraded and the school environment achieves a level of excellence.

This approach, of course, calls for a departure from top-down hierarchical reform, where all the decisions related to the development and running of the schools are made at the top, and then funnelled down to teachers and constituents. This destroys the morale of the teachers and local church education secretaries.

The teachers begin to feel like "housekeepers" who run errands for the "bosses" in the office.

When teachers feel they are given little recognition or inadequate authority to do their work effectively, they may resign and seek employment elsewhere. As a result, there is high teacher turnover, school facilities continue to be inadequate, and student achievement is poor.

During discussions in our division seminars and conventions, it became obvious that effective reform must be defined and implemented by

teachers at the local level, working in collaboration with their local communities. Each change grew out of the belief that the reform must empower teachers, local church education secretaries, and the community, not stifle them. This, of course, lays a heavy burden on the administrators responsible for recruiting teachers. Greater care must be taken to employ teachers who are dedicated and committed to the cause of God.

During the past quinquennium in this division, we attempted some grass-roots reform. Teachers, local church education secretaries, headmasters, school boards, community leaders, Parent-Teacher Associations, and businessmen worked collaboratively to renovate and improve their schools. The results have been astounding.

At Ikizu Secondary School in Tanzania, the teachers, with the support of the local communities and some business people, have built a TSh.9,000,000 multipurpose building complex. Ikizu would like to introduce an "A"-level program and a teacher-training curriculum. Most of the funds and labor have been raised or donated locally, with the encouragement of the headmaster and the teachers.

At Gunde Primary and Secondary School in Zimbabwe, the teachers, together with the local school com-



mittees have, over the past quinquennium, worked together raising funds, building classroom blocks, staff houses, and laboratories for science and home economics. The Ministry of Education in Zimbabwe has provided financial assistance for some building projects, but the major part of such projects has to be undertaken by local people.

Other schools that added facilities through grass-roots teamwork include Uganda's Bugema High School (two classroom blocks), Bupandagila Secondary School (classrooms and laboratory, including boys' and girls' dormitories) in Tanzania, the construction of Chimpenpe Secondary School in Zambia, as well as the well-constructed Harambe Secondary and Primary Schools in Kenya.

#### ***Training and upgrading national workers for positions of responsibility***

During the past five years the division has focused successfully on training a highly qualified national staff and faculty. In 1985, at the division Educational Leadership Seminar at Naivasha, Nairobi, Kenya, a recommendation later adopted by

the division committee established the following categories and percentages to be supported by the division bursary fund:

1. Institutions of higher learning	40%
2. Secondary school teachers	15%
3. Pastors/departmental/administrative	25%
4. Medical/dental	15%
5. Others	5%

As a result, a number of national workers have received advanced education, or have been upgraded in other ways.

In the past quinquennium, a number of national workers in the following academic ranks have been upgraded:

Ph.D./E.Dd./D.Min.	5
M.A./M.Th./M.Div.	50
M.D. (Physicians)	9
B.A./B.Sc./B.B.A.	150

Five years ago, several of our secondary schools were headed by expatriates. Today, only two of 450 secondary schools have expatriate headmasters. In 1985, Solusi College had an expatriate principal, but today, it has a national principal, Dr. Mishael Muze, a Tanzanian. In addition, 18 other nationals serve as faculty and staff members at Solusi.

The University of Eastern Africa is

also upgrading and recruiting qualified nationals. Five years ago, there were only a handful of nationals on the staff. Today, at least 18 nationals are employed in either faculty or in other responsible staff positions.

#### ***Program upgrading***

Six years ago, Solusi College offered only two four-year courses—religion and business. Affiliation with Andrews University late in 1984 resulted in the rapid expansion of course and program offerings to now include the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Business Administration. Degrees are available in accounting, biblical studies, English, history, home economics, management, religion, and theology, as well as minors in agriculture and computer science.

Andrews University degrees earned on the Solusi campus are recognized by nearly all countries of the Eastern Africa Division. The only notable exception is Zimbabwe. We are optimistic that Solusi College will soon be approved as a nongovernment agency granting recognized degrees.

The University of Eastern Africa offered about seven majors in 1985;

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Union: to improve its classroom buildings.

3. Collège Adventiste de Rwanakeri, Rwanda Union: to complete construction on the men's dormitory.
4. Institut de Bandal, Kinshasa, Zaire Union: to remodel its classroom building.
5. Togo Mission, Togo, Sahel Union: to begin plans for a new secondary school in Lome, Togo.

During the past quinquennium, the education work in the Africa-Indian Ocean Division has expanded and consolidated. Many of our schools have so excelled that they received monetary rewards from their governments. Spiritually, our schools have become more aware of their role as Christian institutions in the church and the community. Throughout the division teachers and administrators have achieved a growing appreciation of the *raison d'être* of our school system. We praise the Lord for His guidance. □

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English, math, biology, industrial technology, and nursing. Except for nursing, all are affiliated with Andrews University. Again with the exception of Zimbabwe, all degree majors offered at UEA are recognized in the countries of Eastern Africa. According to the *Kenya Daily National*, Friday, September 22, 1989, The UEA was included in the list of recognized private universities in Kenya. The university is therefore seriously seeking a charter from the Kenyan Government.

### **New buildings**

Construction of a large three-level administration building, made possible by a donation from National Cash Register Corporation, is the most visible evidence of the collegiate atmosphere of the Solusi College campus. Exeley Hall, named in honor of the chairman of the board of National Cash Register, provides spacious accommodation for administrative offices, a computer center, an assembly hall, and a temporary recreation center. Several apartments for married students have also been built during this same period from the Thirteenth Sabbath Overflow Offering.

### **Spiritual activities**

Nearly all school campuses—primary, secondary, college/univer-

sity—have been actively involved in off-campus evangelistic activities involving students, faculty, and staff. These activities include a weekly prison ministry, local evangelistic crusades, and supervised involvement in the practical life of neighboring churches. On-campus ministries feature an annual Week of Prayer conducted by a guest speaker, a yearly student Week of Prayer, and active prayer bands. As a result, a number of non-Adventist students have been baptized during their study in our schools.

### **Conclusion**

Our schools in the Eastern Africa Division have identified reforms that will help our teachers provide meaningful learning activities to meet the needs of students and communities.

We seek to personalize Seventh-day Adventist education, and will make serious efforts to draw educational strength from the needs and ideas of teachers, local education secretaries, students, and communities. We will encourage every worker to invest time, energy, and imagination to achieve greater productivity. This will help our students achieve their goals and prepare them to meet our soon-returning Saviour. □

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great plan."<sup>35</sup>

### **Equity for Teachers**

The church's response brought equity to church school teachers. As full-fledged denominational workers, they were soon salaried at the rate of the licensed ministry. Adventists had adopted the philosophy that church school teachers deserved moral and financial support just as did ministers. It was as important to instruct the church's children in scriptural principles as to teach those doctrines to adults.

As a result of the church's ongoing decisions and actions relating to education, Adventists became committed to corporate support of church schools and equitable pay for teachers.

During this period the philosophy prevailed that church school teachers performed a ministry similar in importance to that of the minister. Indeed, Ellen White had emphasized, "The work of God in all its wide extent is one."<sup>36</sup> That philosophy continues to this day. The Autumn Council of 1913 formalized the financial implications of that philosophy:

We believe that the remuneration of all should be equitable and just to all; that there should be no discrimination in favor of a certain class, nor against those whose line of work does not yield large direct returns in money. Faithful, painstaking, efficient workers in every part of the world, and in every line of work should receive a remuneration that will be fair and equitable.<sup>37</sup> □

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### NOTES AND REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Lamson, "Organization of Church Schools," *West Michigan Herald* (September 28, 1904).

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Griggs, "Department of Education Biennial Report for the Period Ending Dec. 31, 1904," at 1905 GC session, *Review and Herald* (May 18, 1905).

<sup>3</sup> W. C. White letter, October 23, 1899, quoted by William Covert, "Testimonies Concerning the Support of Church Schools," *Wisconsin Reporter* (November 2, 1904).

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1948), vol. 6, p. 142. While the church thus is ever to be innovative, it can benefit from some of the useful concepts that were considered in the early years of the 20th century as it embarked upon a wide-scale church school movement.

<sup>5</sup> Soon to be entitled *Christ's Object Lessons*.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen White statement, January 23, 1900, published in *Advocate of Christian Education* (April 1900).

<sup>7</sup> Ellen White article read at 1900 Teachers' Conference, published in *Advocate of Christian Education* (July 1900).

<sup>8</sup> Ellen White, "The Need of Church-Schools," *Pacific Union Recorder* (November 21, 1901).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Ellen White, "Offerings," *Pacific Union Recorder* (October 24, 1901).

<sup>11</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 217, 211, 145.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>13</sup> Source material for this section is taken from the *1899 GC Daily Bulletin*.

<sup>14</sup> Considering that the total tithing income for the church that year was \$490,000, the enormity of the educational debt can be seen in perspective.

<sup>15</sup> Proceedings of the 1889 General Conference session, October 31, 1889.

<sup>16</sup> P. T. Magan to Ellen White, July 19, 1901.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> "Support of Schools," *Advocate of Christian Education* (January 1903).

<sup>19</sup> H. A. Washburn, *Bulletin of Conference of Church School Teachers*, 1900, pp. 201-202.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>22</sup> P. T. Magan to Ellen White, July 31, 1901.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> E. A. Sutherland to Ellen White, July 31, 1901.

<sup>26</sup> P. T. Magan, "Organization of the Educational Work," *Advocate of Christian Education* (May 1902).

<sup>27</sup> Ellen G. White, Letter 67, 1901.

<sup>28</sup> Ellen G. White, Ms. 67, 1901, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> "Conference Proceedings: Recommendations," *Advocate of Christian Education* (October 1902).

<sup>30</sup> "Report of First Annual Conference of Southern California Conference," *Pacific Union Recorder* (November 6, 1902).

<sup>31</sup> *1903 General Conference Daily Bulletin*, pp. 177, 178, 183.

<sup>32</sup> Frederick Griggs, "Convention of the Educational Department of the General Confer-