



EUD

Opportunities, Blessings, and Challenges

BY ROBERTO BADENAS

Adventist education in the Euro-Africa Division (EUD) has faced constant challenges and received constant blessings during the past quinquennium (2005-2010). Despite difficulties and problems, our institutions have succeeded in creating new programs, developing new projects, and taking advantage of new opportunities.

New Developments

In Romania, kindergarten education is reaching new milestones. During the past five years, the number of Adventist kindergarten programs in the country has climbed to 56, with more than 1,000 children enrolled, many of them from non-Adventist families. These kindergartens will provide the pupils for a

nationwide network of elementary schools that will eventually swell the enrollment in our three academies, which baptize an average of 100 youth every year.

The construction of a new building for our elementary school on the beautiful island of Madeira (Portugal), linked to a community center, will enhance the image of the Adventist Church there and provide outstanding support for social work and outreach. "Talent Workshop," an extracurricular program in Lisbon, has generated high expectations. It teaches music and six other extra-curricular activities, and offers counseling and guidance to parents and children in need.

After operating for many years in the church building, the school "A bis Z" of Zurich (Switzerland) in July 2009 opened a new complex in a green zone outside the city.

Friedensau Adventist University (Germany) holds state recognition, recently renewed, for both its theology and social work programs. It has recently been able to extend the benefits of its official government accreditation to the theology departments of Adventist University of France and Sazava Theological Seminary (Czech Republic). An agreement with Waldfriede Nursing School in Berlin (Germany) will lead to a new accredited B.A. program in nursing. Recently, Friedensau has added two new programs taught in English: a Master of Arts in International Social Sciences and a Master of Theological Studies, both of which attract international students.

In June 2009, Italian Adventist College in Villa Aurora (near Florence) received state accreditation for its theology programs, including an M.A. in religion with two main emphases: Religion, Rights, and Society; and Family Pastoral Care. The Adventist Theological Institute in Cernica (Romania) received state accreditation for its theology programs in September 2009. Its social work degree also has official accreditation.

Sagunto College (Spain) has requested state recognition. Meanwhile, it has affiliated with Collonges and Friedensau for the accreditation of its fifth-year pastoral training. In 2006, the Bulgarian Union launched a new pastoral training program in Sofia, the newest Adventist seminary in the EUD.

The division's European campuses offer programs in collaboration with Adventist institutions around the world. Andrews University, for example, operates M.A. programs in international development and leadership at Villa Aurora (Italy) and Collonges (France), M.A. programs in religion at Cernica (Romania) and Sagunto Col-



Pupils of the Oliveira do Douro Adventist Elementary school in Portugal enjoy a Week of Prayer.

lege (Spain), and is investigating the possibility of offering a D.Min. in Spanish at Sagunto. The Adventist Theological Institute of Cernica has started an M.A. extension program in education in collaboration with Montemorelos University (Mexico).

Miraculous Events

Many developments at our schools could be labeled as miracles. The Timon School in Madrid (Spain), which operated in an old town building, was about to be closed by the government for failure to comply with the European Com-

munity requirements. When the education authorities saw that it produced excellent results despite the high percentage of foreign pupils, they proposed including it in an educational project to integrate migrant families into the community. For the price of one symbolic euro, the city of Madrid donated a large piece of land for a new school. The new facilities, inaugurated on September 20, 2005, provide Adventist education to more than 300 children, 85 percent of them foreigners. The school receives full state subsidies and is considered a model pilot program.

Something quite unexpected also happened to our Urgell School in central Barcelona (Spain), which needed a playground. The town allowed them to build an “impossible” playground suspended over the roof of the nearby Adventist church, a unique innovation for that city. This school, operating in the Catalan language, also receives subsidies from the Catalonia government.



New facilities of the Zurich A bis Z School in the vicinity of Zurich, Switzerland



The Sagunto Academy choir in Spain won first prize in the Valencia Province Christmas contest.

Other Achievements

Our college at Sagunto has always placed a strong emphasis on music. In 2005, it obtained recognition as a music conservatory with the name of “Centro profesional de grado elemental y medio Johann Sebastian Bach.” It now has 10 teachers and 120 students, offers training on 12 musical instruments, and has three orchestras and three choirs that have won awards in state and regional competitions.

Two nursing schools, one attached to Waldfriede Adventist Hospital in Berlin (Germany), the other one in Braila (Romania) every year graduate scores of high-quality nurses. Both are seeking to affiliate with Adventist universities.

Through their agreements with Adventist Colleges Abroad (ACA), the EUD language schools have a long tradition of teaching the languages of the countries where they are located. Thousands of students from around the world have learned



Student enrolled in Maurece Tieche Academy's mountain sports program (France) gets a climbing lesson on Salève Mountain.

French at Adventist University of France, Spanish at Sagunto College in Spain, German at Friedensau University in Germany and Bogenhofen Schloss Seminar in Austria, and Italian at Villa Aurora in Florence, Italy. These schools, together with Newbold College, have formed a consortium (*SDA Languages in*

Europe, <http://www.sdalanguages.eu>), to optimize their efforts in offering high-quality training in these important languages.

Integration of faith and learning is a constant concern for our institutions. In order to help our science teachers with their difficult assignments, the EUD Education Department, together with the Geoscience Research Institute (GRI) organized a study tour in the Pyrenees Mountains (summer 2007) for 26 participants. Another seminar on the integration of faith and learning took place in July 2009 for about 100 teachers from the Portuguese and Spanish unions. The next seminar is scheduled for the summer of 2010 at Sagunto College.

At the same time, the student association chapters of Adventist Ministry to College and University Students (AMiCUS) continue to organize seminars on the important issues that interest Adventists studying at public universities. The most recent congress at the division level

took place in September 2008 at Cernica University (Romania) on the topic of “The Christian Responsibility in Regard to Climate Change.” The mayor of Bucharest congratulated the students on this important event.

Special Recognition

Sometimes it takes a long time before one’s efforts are recognized. On September 14, 2006, Israel’s ambassador to the United Nations gave the “Medal of the Righteous Among the Nations” to Emile and Yvonne Bernard, formerly farmers at Adventist University of France. An engraved plate on a large stone at the entrance of the Theology Department honors them, together with John Weidner (1912-1994), for having taken great risks to save the lives of Jewish people during the



New library, Friedensau Adventist University (Germany)



Students in the Italian language program at Florence enjoy a field trip.

Holocaust and German occupation, by helping them escape to Switzerland. The plate also includes the names of other members of our institution who were involved in these noble actions, including Roger Fasnacht, business administrator; Frederic Charpiot, Jean Lavanchy, Raymond Meyer and Jean Zurcher, professors; and Pierre Toureille, a medical doctor who acted with the occasional complicity of several students. To resist for God and dedicate our lives to His service remains an inspiring ideal for Adventist education. ✍



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