



Lemon grove (la limonaia)

Photo courtesy of Tiziano Rimoldi and Italian Adventist University.

# Italian Adventist University

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## TIZIANO RIMOLDI

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Italian Adventist University, Villa Aurora (Istituto Avventista di Cultura Biblica) is the Seventh-day Adventist university-level educational institution in Italy.

## Developments that Led to the Establishment of the School

The first non-official Adventist missionary to arrive in Italy was Michael Belina Czechowski, in 1864. His work in Torre Pellice, in the Waldensian Valleys, lasted just over a year. When he moved to Switzerland, he left a small company of Sabbathkeepers.<sup>1</sup> John N. Andrews, the first official Seventh-day Adventist representative, visited Italy in 1877 and baptized a handful of believers. For decades, despite the efforts of the first Adventist missionaries, among whom was Ellen G. White in 1885, there were few members: the *1904 Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* reports 37 members, 1 church, and 3 missionaries in the Italian Mission.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1920s a certain growth in numbers took place. With funds coming from the Big Week offering, in 1925 a building lot was bought in Via Trieste 23, Florence, where the following year a new building was erected, hosting the headquarters of the Italian Mission and the publishing house. In 1928, the Italian Union Mission was formed, with three mission fields: North, Central, and South.<sup>3</sup>

The events leading to the establishment of a school had an unexpected origin, unconnected with the developments of the work in the Italian metropolitan territory. In 1935, Italy attacked Ethiopia and conquered its capital, Addis Ababa, in May 1936. The Seventh-day Adventist Church had important educational and medical institutions in Ethiopia, run mostly by Scandinavian personnel. Concerned about possible future restrictive measures, the General Conference Committee, in October 1937, considering that “[t]he conditions in Ethiopia make it advisable that the mission leadership be of Italian nationality,” requested “the Southern European Division [SED] to release three workers qualified to serve [in] the Ethiopian Union Mission,”<sup>4</sup> all of whom of Italian nationality.<sup>5</sup> According to Walter R. Beach, then secretary of the SED, “Italy must be transformed into a home base for the work in Italian East Africa.”<sup>6</sup>

At that time, Italian workers were sent to the South European Division Seminary in Collonges, France, to complete their ministerial education, but it was argued that

[t]he arrangement has been unsatisfactory ... for many reasons, among which the linguistic problem has not been the least important. At Collonges our Italian youth have been forced to study largely in French, and, because of this, have been insufficiently prepared for work in their mother tongue. The result has been a serious drawback in many cases. But today the problem must be considered from a much more urgent viewpoint. In fact, an emergency situation is now upon us.<sup>7</sup>

The fact that the Italian Union did not have a school of its own was now seen not only as an impediment for the work in the local field, but also from the Ethiopian perspective:

Needless to say, Italy is at present entirely unprepared to consent to such a draft upon its working force. But this is only the beginning of what will be necessary in order to ensure the future development of the work in the Italian colonial empire. Because of this *the conviction has been pressed home to us that Italy must have a school immediately if the cause in the homeland is not to be jeopardized and the expansion of the work overseas*

*handicapped.*<sup>8</sup> [italics added]

In December 1937, the SED voted to

ask A. V. Olson and W. R. Beach to study with the Italian Union committee plans and possibilities for the opening of a training school in Italy in view of presenting a definite request to the General Conference for the financial help that may be necessary for such a project.<sup>9</sup>

Consequently, the two SED officers went to Italy in January 1938 and visited, together with the Italian Union Committee (IUC), a property to be bought as the site of the new school to be established. The IUC asked Beach to prepare the financial and educational plans for the establishment of such institution.<sup>10</sup> Beach was very sensitive to the issue of having a school in Italy, which he linked directly with the spreading of the gospel's light: "Italy has vast unentered regions and neither sanitarium nor school have yet been established. Our work in Italy is still only a few bright flashes of light in the darkness of midnight."<sup>11</sup>

## Founding of the School

In May 1938, the purchase of a former Methodist church building with parsonage in Via San Gallo, in the center of Florence, was voted by the General Conference. This made possible the plan to move the Italian Union headquarters and publishing house there from Via Trieste, which was now seen as the place where the future missionary school could be located.<sup>12</sup>

In the same month, the IUC decided to devote its July session to the examination of the budget for the opening of the new missionary school in Florence.<sup>13</sup>

While "[d]uring the past years it has become very evident that a training school for Italy was one of Southern Europe's major needs," after the start of the war in June 1939,<sup>14</sup> "this need, with the development of the European situation, took on a character of urgency."<sup>15</sup>

In July 1939, the former Methodist church building was bought, and plans were made to open the school in November 1939. Unfortunately, "due to the uncertainty of the future, the opening of the Italian Union training school [was] postponed."<sup>16</sup>

In January 1940, the IUC decided to begin moving its offices from Via Trieste to Via San Gallo on March 1, 1940, while the opening of the school was scheduled for September 25, 1940.<sup>17</sup> Despite the political situation (Italy entered the war on June 11, 1940) and the very limited number of students envisaged, in August 1940 the SED voted to concur with the opinion of the IUC and authorized the opening of the school as planned.<sup>18</sup> Eventually the school was opened in October 1940.<sup>19</sup>

The new school offered a four-year course, with at least twenty weeks of classes per year, with a final diploma, titled Bible Lecturer. However, the school was not intended only for those who wished to become ministers. In

fact, the purpose of the school was

[t]o give an adequate spiritual, mental and physical preparation to the students, in view of the formation of workers able to serve in the various branches of the work, namely: Evangelization, in the Homeland and colonies, canvassing, administration, etc.<sup>20</sup>

Actually, the school welcomed those looking for a more rapid and practical education, wishing to become colporteurs or evangelists,<sup>21</sup> and, in general, to “young Christians, men and women desiring to live their life in the principles of Christ.”<sup>22</sup>

The faculty consisted of Giuseppe Cupertino (principal), Mario Vincentelli, and Alice and Enrico Bertalot.<sup>23</sup> A local committee was formed with Luigi Beer (president), G. Cupertino (secretary), Giovanni Fenz (treasurer), M. Vincentelli, and E. Bertalot.<sup>24</sup>

The first class was of twelve students: eight young men and four young women;<sup>25</sup> in 1944, three of them graduated, two men and one woman.<sup>26</sup>

During the war, the school and its students, faculty, and personnel shared anxieties, dangers, and hardships with their Florentine fellow citizens, e.g. the shortage of food, the bombing by the Allies, the last actions of the retreating German army, including the destruction of all the city's bridges but one.<sup>27</sup> On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1944, in one of the last skirmishes between the Wehrmacht and the Allies on the hills surrounding Florence, a mortar shell hit the roof of the school.<sup>28</sup>

The school is listed for the first time in the *Yearbook* in the 1946 edition as “Istituto Adventista Di Cultura Biblica”, the correct name being Istituto Avventista di Cultura Biblica (IACB), located in Via Trieste 23, Florence.<sup>29</sup> Since 1947, it is listed as “Italian Training School (Istituto Avventista di Cultura Biblica).”<sup>30</sup>

## A New Beginning

The location in Via Trieste was not ideal for a boarding school; e.g., in the basement of the small building, a large room served as classroom, library, chapel, cafeteria, and, in a corner divided by a thin screen of bricks, also kitchen.<sup>31</sup>

For this reason, Albert V. Olson and Frederic Brennwald (at that time vice president and another official of the General Conference, respectively), W. R. Beach (president of the SED), and L. Beer (superintendent of the Italian Union Mission), cooperated to find and secure a new location for the school.

The year 1947 was very intense for the IACB. On February 6, the Italian Union, by means of its newly founded company, the Nuova Aurora S.r.l. (“New Dawn Ltd.”), bought from Margery Maquay, the widow of count Giuliano Caccia, at the price of 5 million liras,<sup>32</sup> an estate of about 19 hectares (47 acres), known as “Villa Aurora,”<sup>33</sup> to become the new school location. Since its transfer, the school and its campus were, and still are, known in the

Adventist world simply as “Villa Aurora,” an appropriate name for an Adventist institution, “Aurora” meaning “Dawn” (2 Peter 1:19). During the presidency of Pierre Winandy (1980-1985), his wife Gisela Willi contributed to spreading the name of Villa Aurora thanks to the choirs she created and lead, the “Aurora Fiorentina” (50 members) and the “Cantores Aurorae” (25 members), which were engaged in tours around Italy and Europe.<sup>34</sup>

The property of Villa Aurora includes a large Renaissance villa, a garden with ancient exotic trees, and annexed fields and buildings (farms, warehouses, etc.). Located on the hills north of Florence, about 5 km from the city center, Villa Aurora is part of the national heritage.

Villa Aurora is in the middle of a vast hospital area including the general hospital, the trauma center, the pediatric hospital, the medical school of Florence University, and various private clinics and retirement homes.

A few days after the purchase of Villa Aurora in 1947, Ivo Evangelisti, an Adventist farmer, joined the following year by colleague Valentino Fiuzzi with his family, moved to Villa Aurora to organize the farming activities (wheat, olive trees, cows, hens, etc.) and oversee the tasks of the students earning their tuition by working on the farm. Frequently, the work of the inexpert students was not economically profitable, but it was conducted for educational purposes.<sup>35</sup>

In May, the school moved from Via Trieste to the new location. The next month the renovation of a small building beside the villa began, to create the boy's dormitory.<sup>36</sup>

In August, Villa Aurora hosted the first Missionary Volunteer Department Camporee in Italy, with over 80 participants,<sup>37</sup> showing from the start its vocation to be also a campsite and a place for gatherings and congresses for the Italian Union.

The first academic year in the new location started on September 22, 1947, under the presidency of G. Cupertino, the faculty being Maddalena (“Lena”) Arbore, E. Bertalot, Anna Lippolis, Vincenzo Stragapede, Giovanni Valcarengi, and M. Vincentelli;<sup>38</sup> a new cook was hired, Elisena Luchicchia.<sup>39</sup> During the academic year, the campus church was created.<sup>40</sup>

## Enlarging the Educational Offer: First Steps

In September 1952, the newly appointed principal, Bert B. Beach, inaugurated the academic year with about 80 students.<sup>41</sup> In fact, in the 50s, besides the theology curriculum, the school started to prepare 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to get through the middle school examination (8<sup>th</sup> grade)<sup>42</sup>; by the early 60s, the school also offered a preparatory course to cover the first two years of high school (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade). In both cases, the exams were to be taken at the state school.<sup>43</sup>

On October 24, 1965, the campus church opened the first Italian Adventist primary school (1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade), with eight pupils. The school was housed in a former citrus greenhouse, remodeled thanks to a donation sent by two

brethren from America sufficient to modernize the building and buy a school bus.<sup>44</sup>

## November 1966: Flood of the Arno River

On November 3-4, 1966, Florence suffered heavy damages caused by the Arno River bursting its banks in the city. The flood killed about one hundred people and damaged or destroyed millions of masterpieces of art and rare books, as well as motor vehicles, houses, public buildings, and business and industrial activities.

The school, being in an elevated position, was not affected by the flood; notwithstanding, lessons were suspended to enable students and personnel to take part in rescue operations, joining thousands of other volunteers coming from all over the world, referred to as "Mud Angels."

A school committee was formed to care for the great quantity of relief material arriving from local Italian Adventist churches and from the Adventist world (Italy, Switzerland, United States, etc.). In the main hall of the school, a distribution center was established, and The Dorcas Society of the Villa Aurora Church organized to take care of cases of extreme need.<sup>45</sup>

## Working to Obtain State Accreditation

During the 1966-1967 academic year, the Italian government decided to set the completion of compulsory schooling at age 13 (the end of the middle school, or 8<sup>th</sup> grade), instead of 10 (the end of primary school, or 5<sup>th</sup> grade).

That very year, the school asked for the official recognition of the *ginnasio* (the first biennium of the grammar school, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade), privately opened since 1963. The program was recognized<sup>46</sup> after a thorough examination by an inspector of the Ministry of Education; this implied that the exams to get the completion of the biennium would take place in the school, the examining board being composed of the internal teachers and one external member from the provincial office of the Ministry of Education.<sup>47</sup> The upgrade of the school was secured by providing new qualified teachers.

In 1969 a building used in bygone days as servants' quarters and stable was converted into a classroom building, increasing the educational facilities of the campus;<sup>48</sup> at that time the educational programs offered were:

1. Colporteur training course (private), professional course, two years;<sup>49</sup>
2. *Ginnasio* (officially recognized), high school, two years (9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grade);
3. Middle school (private), three years (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade);
4. Scientific lyceum (private), high school, the first three years out of five (9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grade);

5. Secretarial school (private), professional course, two years;
6. Teacher training school (private), high school, the first three years out of four (9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grade);
7. Theology course (private), two years.

In the spring of 1971, the middle school (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade) was recognized by the State, eliminating the need for external examination of the students in the first two years. That year the total enrollment of the middle school was about thirty students, half of which were residents.<sup>50</sup> The middle school was mainly designed for students from Florence, Adventist or not; in fact, the Education Department of the Union advised against the sending of children under 14 as boarding students, except for particular cases.<sup>51</sup>

From the 1972-1973 academic year, the *ginnasio* was gradually phased out, while the scientific lyceum was officially recognized,<sup>52</sup> one year at a time.<sup>53</sup>

## The Theology Course

Starting in 1968, the high school diploma (12<sup>th</sup> grade) became a preferable requirement for the enrollment in the License in Theology curriculum offered by the “Corso teologico” (Theology Course).<sup>54</sup> After two years of theology studies and the acquisition of the Bible worker diploma, the students could complete their theological education at the Seminary at Collonges, France, after two or more years.<sup>55</sup>

In 1974, the summer school for lay preachers was held at Villa Aurora for the first time, organized by the theology department, in collaboration with the Lay Activities Department of the Italian Mission and of the Southern European Union Mission;<sup>56</sup> in 1981 the course was resumed and has been offered almost every summer until today.<sup>57</sup>

In the 1975-1976 academic year, to help prospective theology students enroll, the scholarship plan “Piano delle tre vie” (“Three Ways Plan”) was created: the local church could allocate a certain amount for the student, then the Italian Union and the school would each match the local churches contribution then the Italian Union would duplicate it, and the school triplicate it.<sup>58</sup> Later, the plan was enhanced and is still active today.<sup>59</sup> Various courses were offered in the theological department at the time.<sup>60</sup>

## The First Adventist FM Radio Station in Italy

In 1978, Ron Myers, the coordinator of Adventist World Radio Europe, visited Florence to promote the idea of creating an Adventist FM radio station in Italy. The school seemed the best location, involving teachers and students in the broadcasting activities. Thanks to the expertise of Myers, the cooperation of the school in supplying free premises for the transmitter and studio facilities (the antenna was located on the roof of the

Renaissance villa), the funds provided by some donors and by the two Adventist churches of Florence (the campus church and the downtown church), and the legal coverage given by the Italian Union, the “Radio Voce della Speranza” (“Voice of Hope Radio”) began broadcasting Sabbath, December 1, 1979, using a 100-watt FM transmitter, with an operating radius of 75 kilometers. It was the first broadcast in Italy of an Adventist-owned-and-operated FM radio station.<sup>61</sup> The Radio Voce della Speranza is still active.

## Developments in the Theology Course

In 1983-1984, the IACB received a state accreditation visit, with positive results,<sup>62</sup> stimulating a process of constant improvement in the theological education provided.

On September 19, 1987, at the celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Villa Aurora, the seminary presented *Adventus*, its journal of ethics and religious studies, still active.<sup>63</sup>

As recommended by the accreditation visit, the theology course passed from two to three years,<sup>64</sup> beginning with the academic year 1989-1990. The practical theology area was created.<sup>65</sup> The weekly hours changed from the previous 24-26 to 16. One of the reasons that worked in favor of the extension to three years was the possible implementation of the “Intesa” (a general agreement) signed by the Italian Union and the Italian government on 1986 and adopted into law in 1988 (Law no. 516 of 1988), which officially recognized the theology degrees conferred at the end of a three-year course to students with a high school diploma.<sup>66</sup>

## Important Expansion in the Campus Facilities

According to Law no. 516 of 1988, the IACB was recognized as an “ente ecclesiastico adventista civilmente riconosciuto” (ecclesiastical institution with civil law status). Therefore, in 1990 it was necessary to charter the new legal entity, with its own statutes and bylaws, and to transfer to it the property of the campus<sup>67</sup> and of the educational activities.<sup>68</sup>

Over the years, the buildings on the campus underwent a number of minor renovations and updating of technical equipment. With the increase of the student population (an average of more than 100)<sup>69</sup>, around the middle of the 70s<sup>70</sup> the administration of the school started to think about the renovation of the existing buildings and the construction of new premises for academic use. Both activities were difficult, the entire property, land and buildings, being submitted to zoning ordinances, and special permission from the Superintendence of Fine Arts was needed before any action.<sup>71</sup> In 1980, new county planning was approved by the Municipality of Florence, giving the possibility to build new academic structures in the lower part of the campus.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, finances remained an issue.<sup>73</sup>

An important portion of the money needed to start the renovation and construction program arrived through the generosity of the World Church. In fact, a part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering of the second quarter of



1989 was devoted to help build a new classroom block at Villa Aurora;<sup>74</sup> the financial plan for the new building saw also the substantial intervention of the IACB, the Italian Union, and the Euro-Africa Division (EUD).<sup>75</sup> In 1990, ground was broken for the new educational building.<sup>76</sup> In 1991-1992, to finance the new building, the IACB was forced to sever from the campus and to sell a cottage with 0,5 hectares (1,24 acres) of land previously used for the president's house ("villetta del Direttore").<sup>77</sup>

The prospects seemed good, considering that in 1990 there were around 130 students in the different classes and courses,<sup>78</sup> but, regrettably, in 1994, before the end of the construction, the middle school was closed, due to lack of enrollment.<sup>79</sup> The new building was put into use in the academic year 1995-1996.<sup>80</sup> But a short time later, in June 1997, the scientific lyceum was also closed. The life of the IACB was in jeopardy.

## Refocusing the Mission

Starting in 1950, the school promoted cultural summer vacations for foreigners. The program included educational trips to Pisa, Siena, San Gimignano, Assisi, Perugia, and Rome.<sup>81</sup> Over the years, a certain interest in learning the Italian language gave birth to a summer course in Italian language and culture.<sup>82</sup> In both cases, the figures were negligible.

With the crisis in enrollment of the 90s, the language program was given new attention and included in the academic and economic revival of the IACB.<sup>83</sup> Since 1993-1994 the "Dipartimento di Lingua, Cultura e Arte Italiana" (DiLCAI) (Department of Italian Language, Culture, and Art) operates in cooperation with the Adventist Colleges Abroad (ACA) program of the North American Division (NAD), first for summer courses, and since 1996-1997 for the full academic year. In 2004, the IACB was one of the founding members of the European Consortium of Seventh-day Adventist language schools, initially called "Linguae pro adventu," then "SDA Languages.eu." The DiLCAI also prepares ACA and other foreign students for the "Progetto Lingua Italiana Dante Alighieri" (PLIDA) test, an internationally recognized diploma of proficiency in the Italian language.

Once again, the events leading to important changes in the activities of the school came from historical situations. At the beginning of the 90s, Italy saw the emergence of a stream of hundreds of thousands of immigrants coming from former Communist countries. Many of them had difficulties starting a new life and remained for years in camps. In 1997, reacting to a request coming from the prefecture, the IACB accepted to host a refugee camp within the campus boundaries.<sup>84</sup> While a few dozen of families were accommodated in tents and caravans in the upper part of the campus, others were hosted in the second story of the new educational building, which was remodeled to create rooms instead of classrooms.<sup>85</sup> The refugees remained for years; only by the end of 2004 had the great majority of them left the campus.<sup>86</sup>

In the same period, a farmhouse located in the lower part of the campus was transformed into a women's shelter, thanks to Italian government funds.<sup>87</sup> During the renovation of the male dormitory, the farmhouse was used as a provisional student residence. In 2008, it returned to social use, becoming a structure for hosting

families of people hospitalized nearby.

Being in the center of a hospital zone is a challenging situation. In fact, during the years, large portions of the campus property were expropriated for public interest, to favor the expansion of the existing university and hospitals. On the other hand, it can bring unexpected possibilities. Indeed, the planning authority decided to address the always-increasing flow of cars in the area by creating a large parking lot in a portion of the lower part of the campus. The municipality at that time did not have the money to expropriate the section of land required, so it asked the IACB to create a joint venture with a local cooperative to run the new parking lot: the IACB bringing as an endowment the portion of land required, the other partner providing the administrative structure and personnel. The new company was officially created in 1995, and in 1998 the municipality signed an agreement, conceding it to run the parking lot business for 75 years, at the end of which the land would pass to the municipality. The activity started effectively in 2001. From the beginning of its operations, the parking lot was and still is an important asset in the economic revival of the IACB.

## Difficulties Overcome

The reconquered, but delicate, educational and economic stability allowed the leadership to think again about new building projects.

Since the purchase of Villa Aurora, sport facilities were needed.<sup>88</sup> To contribute toward solving the problem, in 1998 the administration started to design a new swimming pool. After receiving the building permit in 1999, the Board of Trustees authorized the construction in November 2002.<sup>89</sup> The masonry part was completed in October 2005, but the pipework remained unfinished (the swimming pool remains unrealized). The enterprise collapsed during the financial crisis of the IACB that was looming on the horizon.

In fact, in February 2003, the Italian Union had determined to start the construction of a large new building on the campus, largely financed with a bank loan, including a male dormitory for about 85 students, a dozen flats for the personnel, a new cafeteria, a laundry, a gymnasium, a music room, and a warehouse.<sup>90</sup> In February 2004, the Italian Union asked the EUD for authorization for the new building.<sup>91</sup> Due to poor financial planning, the construction of the half-built edifice was halted in April 2006.<sup>92</sup>

The Italian Union and the IACB considered the possibility of renting the incomplete building,<sup>93</sup> arriving at, in April 2007, the decision to sell it.<sup>94</sup> In November 2010, the Italian Union and the IACB reversed their previous pronouncement and decided to keep the building and restart construction. The project financing was taken over by a loan from the EUD and an allocation from the social budget of the Italian Union.<sup>95</sup> This action brought with it a change in the usage of the spaces: instead of a dormitory, a large part of the new building was destined to create the Life and Hope Center, "CasAurora", with 31 rooms for accommodating the relatives of hospitalized people.<sup>96</sup> The construction site was reopened on June 2012,<sup>97</sup> and the new building inaugurated on January 31,

2014.<sup>98</sup>

## Accreditations, Degrees, Specialties, Partnerships

The Adventist Statistical Report (ASR)

For a rundown of the *ASR* reports from 1946 to 2000, a detailed text is provided in the endnote.<sup>99</sup> The *ASR* has noted some changes in status of the “Italian Adventist College Villa Aurora” from 2004 until 2017.<sup>100</sup> In spite of the fact that the denominational *Annual Statistical Reports* used a variety of names for the institution, at times even incorrect ones, the name of the IACB has always remained, legally speaking, “Istituto avventista di cultura biblica,” while all the others were names of convenience, except for the last one, “Italian Adventist University Villa Aurora”, that was added besides the original one in the officially recognized statute of 2014.

October 4, 2011, the AAA granted up to December 31, 2015, to the “Istituto Avventista di Cultura Biblica” the status of “Level III” institution, offering “post-graduate courses and programs leading to master’s degrees or higher.” This status was confirmed on April 6, 2016, through to December 31, 2020.<sup>101</sup>

The Italian State and the EUD recognition of the IACB theology degrees

With Law no. 516 of 1988 of the Italian state, the three-year theological degrees received a status equivalent to a “Diploma universitario” (a three-year college degree). At that time, pastoral training consisted of three years of theological studies at Villa Aurora, followed by one or two more years at the EUD Seminary, in Collonges. Unfortunately, the leaders of the school did not seem to be aware that an implementation decree was necessary to translate this opportunity into reality.

Only in September 1999, did the IACB apply for State recognition for its programs in theology. A draft of an agreement was signed by the Secretary to the Prime Minister in January 16, 2001, and then approved by the Council of Ministers on February 14, 2003. The Prime Minister and the President of the Italian Union signed the agreement on April 23, 2004, but, due to some minor textual changes, the final draft of the agreement was signed on April 4, 2007. The Parliament approved the text and turned it into Law no. 67 of 2009.<sup>102</sup>

Partnership with Andrews University

From the summer of 2002 until 2015, the IACB hosted off-campus cohorts of the Master in International Development of Andrews University.

## Historical Role of the School

The IACB has never been a school with great numbers,<sup>103</sup> just like the Italian field. However, since its inception, the leaders of the work in Italy were convinced that an educational institution was necessary. A particular historical conjuncture made it possible to attract the attention of the World Church, which put forth an

important financial effort. According to the words of the President of the Italian Union, Luigi Beer, in 1948, "The school has become a great blessing to the field. How could the new interests springing up here and there among the 46 million inhabitants be followed up, if it were not for the assurance of this new generation of young workers? Who would have cared for the four new churches which have been organized already this year?"  
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Moreover, since 1947, the presence of an Adventist campus in Florence, placed in a very favorable position, has been able to attract Adventists around the world to visit Italy and learn the language and the culture, thus bringing the Italian church closer to the World Church and to the people of Florence. In recent years, the leadership of the school has tried to increase these links and, albeit with limited resources, there is a renewed interest, demonstrated by interaction with the most important educational institutions of the Adventist world and with the city authorities for social and educational projects.

## What Remains to be Done to Fulfill Mission

The school is more than a small factory to produce new ministers. It is a strategic place for the Italian and the worldwide church, the campus being, with all its various activities, a religious, cultural, and social center, like the school of the prophets in the time of the prophet Elisha.

In February 2007, the IACB supported the opening of the Centro di Scienze Umane e Religiose (Cultural Center for Human and Religious Sciences), with the intention of creating a wider space that might promote and make possible an accurate and responsible reflection in dialogue with contemporary society and culture. At the crossroads of environmental, social, cultural, scientific, artistic and religious phenomena that are rapidly transforming the profile of families, communities, interpersonal relationships and society itself, this dialogue seems not only desirable but also obligatory.

A new church building was completed on the campus in 2007; the campus church united with the community previously located in the center of Florence, forming one of the largest local Adventist churches in Italy.

The cultural center, the new church building, and the guesthouse CasAurora created a unique opportunity to serve the city of Florence and to make the presence of the school relevant not only for the Adventist Church but also for the larger society. Sports facilities would complete the picture.

## Presidents Chronology

Giuseppe Cupertino, 1940-1952; Bert B. Beach, 1952-1958; Silo Agnello, 1958-1963; Francesco Santini, 1963-1964; Enrico Long, 1964-1968; Michele Buonfiglio, 1968-1970; Alfredo Romano, 1970-1972; Franco Santini, 1972-1975; Hugo Visani, 1975-1976; Franco Santini, 1976-1980; Pierre Winandy, 1980-1985; Raul Posse, 1985-1989; Vittorio Fantoni, 1989-1997; Ignazio Barbuscia, 1997-2005; Filippo Alma, 2005-2010; Tiziano Rimoldi, 2010-2014;

Filippo Alma, 2014-2019; Davide Romano, 2019- .

## Statistics

The highest enrollment was in 1990 (138); the highest number of employees was 46 teachers and 8 other employees in 1989.

Source <sup>105</sup>	Year	Enrollment	Teachers	Other Employees
ASR	1940	12	4	---
ASR	1950	40	6	3
ASR	1960	38	6	---
ASR	1970	93	13	---
ASR	1980	125	23	2
ASR	1990	138	30	8
ASR	2000	55	29	14
ASR	2010	57	29	13
ASR	2018	65	11	17

ASR = Adventist Statistical Report.

### SOURCES

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## NOTES

1. Giuseppe De Meo, "Granel di sale": *Un secolo di storia della Chiesa Cristiana Avventista del 7° giorno in Italia* (Torino: Claudiana, 1980), 53-96.
2. The Italian Mission was part of the Latin Union Mission, in the General European Conference. See "Italian Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1904), 68.
3. See De Meo, "Granel di sale," 97-127.
4. General Conference Committee, October 7, 1937, 495-496, General Conference Archives, accessed August 16, 2018, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1937-10.pdf>.

5. General Conference Committee, October 26, 1937, 569, General Conference Archives, accessed August 16, 2018, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1937-10.pdf>.
6. Walter R. Beach, "Report of the Tenth Winter Council of the Southern European Division," *South European Quarterly Review* 9, no. 4 (December 1937): 4.
7. Beach, "Report of the Tenth Winter Council of the Southern European Division," 8.
8. Ibid.
9. Southern European Division Committee, December 29, 1937. Inter-European Division Archives, Bern, Switzerland.
10. Italian Union Committee, January 5, 1938. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
11. Walter R. Beach, "A Vast Stretch of Unoccupied Fields," *South European Quarterly Review* 10, no. 2 (June 1938): 7.
12. General Conference Committee, May 18, 1938, 776, General Conference Archives, accessed August 16, 2018, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1938-05.pdf>; "Interesting Items," *South European Quarterly Review* 10, no. 2 (June 1938): 8.
13. Italian Union Committee, May 22 5, 1938. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
14. Italy was not involved in the war until June 1940, but the military mobilization started months before the declaration of war.
15. "Interesting Items," *South European Quarterly Review* 11, no. 3 (September 1939): 8.
16. Ibid.
17. Italian Union Committee, February 2, 1940. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
18. Southern European Division Committee, August 6, 1940. Inter-European Division Archives, Bern, Switzerland.
19. Giuseppe Cupertino, "Il richiamo di Villa Aurora," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 24, no. 7 (July 1949): 6.
20. Italian Union Committee, February 2, 1940. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
21. Giuseppe Cupertino, "Come educare la nostra gioventù," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 17, no. 8 (August 1942): 2.
22. Giuseppe Cupertino, "Il bisogno dell'ora. Educare!," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 19, no. 3-4 (March-April 1944): 2. Admission requirements were:  
(1) A recommendation from the local church and from the mission field; (2) At least an elementary school certificate (5<sup>th</sup> grade); (3) A

certificate of good health; (4) A certificate of good moral and political conduct; (5) Some experience in canvassing. – See Italian Union Committee, February 2, 1940. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.

23. Silo Agnello, "Trent'anni!," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 46, no. 8 (August 1971): 82.
24. Italian Union Committee, February 2, 1940. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
25. Luigi Beer, "A Report from the Garden Spot of Europe," *South European Quarterly Review* 15, no. 3 (December 1948): 7; Giuseppe Cupertino, "Io mi ricordo dei giorni antichi," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 46, no. 8 (August 1971): 83.
26. Silo Agnello, "Classe uscente 1957," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 32, no. 6 (June 1957): 8-9. For tuition, room, and board, the fees were 3.330,00 liras, plus four hours of work per week. See Italian Union Committee, February 2, 1940. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
27. Domenico Visigalli, "Ricordo degli anni ruggenti," *Il Messaggero Avventista*, 46, no. 8 (August 1971): 84-85.
28. Cupertino, "Io mi ricordo dei giorni antichi," 83.
29. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), 245.
30. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1947), 244.
31. Cupertino, "Il richiamo di Villa Aurora," 6.
32. Atto di compravendita, February 6, 1947, Istituto avventista di cultura biblica Archives, Florence.
33. The name was probably given to the place by one of its former proprietors, Karl Schmitz's family, in the period 1875-1901. See Paolo Caporali, "Un breve accenno storico," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 57, no. 11 (November 1983): 163.
34. Paolo Caporali, "Villa Aurora Anno XXXIX," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 60, no. 8 (August 1985): 122; Betty J. Jochmans, "Adventists present program in Italian cathedrals," *ARH*, April 14, 1983, 15-16; "News Notes from the World Divisions," *ARH*, February 16, 1984, 20; "News Notes from the World Divisions," *ARH*, August 8, 1985, 20.
35. Emanuele Santini, "Rie-vocazioni," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 56, no. 12 (December 1982): 184-185.
36. Giovanni Cupertino, "1947-1987, Villa Aurora: la scuola compie 40 anni," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 62, no. 8 (September 1987): 142.
37. Cupertino, "1947-1987, Villa Aurora: la scuola compie 40 anni," 142.
38. "Notizie", *Il Messaggero Avventista* 28, no. 4 (April 1948): 16.
39. Cupertino, "1947-1987, Villa Aurora: la scuola compie 40 anni," 142.

40. Ibid.
41. "Riapertura della scuola missionaria a Firenze," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 27, no. 11 (November 1952): 14.
42. "Avviso importante," *Il Messaggero Avventista*, 33, no. 6 (June 1958): 13; "Comunicato," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 33, no. 7 (July 1958): 5.
43. Franco Santini, "Il Ginnasio-Liceo a 'Villa Aurora,'" *Il Messaggero Avventista* 38, no. 6 (June 1963): 7-8.
44. George M. Mathews, "First SDA Elementary School Opened in Italy," *ARH*, December 16, 1965, 32.
45. Ismaele Rimoldi, "Firenze rinasce," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 42, no. 2 (February 1967): 3, 6; Henri Long, "Arno River Inundates Florence, Italy," *ARH*, February 2, 1967, 23.
46. It is important to note that in Italy, because of article 33 of the Constitution, while it is the State that "lays down general rules for education", "[e]ntities and private persons have the right to establish schools and institutions of education", but at "no cost to the State". This prevents private schools, recognized or not, from receiving money from the State, unlike other European countries, such as France, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, etc., in which recognized private schools are entitled to receive funds from the State for various purposes: salaries, maintenance, renovation, transportation, etc.
47. Venerando Sincovich, "Villa Aurora domani," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 41, no. 7 (July 1966): 8, 9.
48. Alfredo Romano, "Guardando al futuro," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 46, no. 8 (August 1971): 88.
49. Michele Buonfiglio, "La Scuola Media di Villa Aurora," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 44, no. 5 (May 1969): 10-11.
50. Franco Santini, "Un riconoscimento ufficiale," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 46, no. 8 (August 1971): 89-90.
51. Pierre Winandy, "Educazione," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 57, no. 10 (October 1982): 153.
52. Franco Santini, "Il primo quadrimestre a Villa Aurora," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 48, no. 3 (March 1973): 32.
53. The second year of the scientific lyceum was recognized in the academic year 1973-1974. See Franco Santini, "Istituto 'Villa Aurora,'" *Il Messaggero Avventista* 49, no. 8 (August 1974): 93-94. The third year was recognized starting with the year 1974-1975. See Luisella Facchini, "Villa Aurora. Diario scolastico," *Il Messaggero Avventista*, 50, no. 7-8 (July-August 1975): 82-83. The fourth year was recognized starting with the year 1975-1976. See Giuseppe De Meo, "Villa Aurora. Casa-scuola sulla collina," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 50, no. 9 (September 1976): 110 d II. The fifth year was recognized starting with the year 1976-1977. See "Alla ricerca della scuola giusta," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 52, no. 7-8 (July-August 1977): 10.

54. From the academic year 1991-1992, a high school diploma was required also for women enrolling in the associates in pastoral care curriculum. See Ivo Fasiori and Emanuele Santini, "Panorama villauroriano," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 66, no. 6 (June 1991): 86.
55. Antonio Caracciolo, "Il Corso teologico a Villa Aurora si avvia verso la maturità," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 43, no. 12 (December 1968): 2.
56. Giovanni De Meo, "Scuola di predicazione laica a Firenze," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 49, no. 10 (October 1974): 120-121.
57. Antonio Caracciolo, "Abbiamo vissuto dieci giorni di cielo," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 56, no. 11 (November 1981): 166.
58. "Fatti salienti nell'anno scolastico 1975-1976," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 50, no. 9 (September 1976): 110 d II.
59. Tiziano Rimoldi, "Piano nazionale delle tre vie," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 85, no. 10 (November 2010): 18-19.
60. In the year 1976-1977, these were: (High school degree required): (1) Two years of theology, to be completed with two additional years in a division school (at that time, Collonges and Darmstadt), leading to a License in Theology; (2) Local Church Teacher Diploma, one year; (3) Secretarial Diploma, one year; (4) Pre-University course, one year. (Middle school degree + two years of high school required): (5) Two years of theology, to be completed with two additional years in the division school of Collonges, leading to an Evangelist Diploma; (6) Two years of theology, to be completed with one additional year in the division school of Collonges, leading to an Assistant Evangelist Diploma. See "Agli studenti che hanno terminato le scuole superiori," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 51, no. 9 (September 1976): 110 d III.
61. "Broadcasting in Italy," *ARH*, January 24, 1980, 19; "News Notes from the World Divisions," *Adventist Review*, June 12, 1980, 20; "Church sets up radio stations," *ARH*, September 11, 1980, 24; Dag-Kristian Pontvik, "La Radio Voce della Speranza di Firenze. Storia di un'emittente avventista" (B.Th. Thesis, Facoltà avventista di teologia, 2004-2005).
62. Emanuele Santini, "L'anno scolastico '83-'84 si chiude in positivo," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 59, no. 7 (July 1984): 109.
63. "È nata Adventus!," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 62, no. 10 (November 1987): 177; Ivo Fasiori, "Celebrazioni per il 40° anniversario di Villa Aurora," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 62, no. 10 (November 1987): 178.
64. Italian Union Committee, June 29-30, 1989. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
65. Ivo Fasiori, "Modifiche al Corso teologico," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 64, no. 10 (November 1989): 166.
66. Fasiori and Santini, "Panorama villauroriano," 86. At that time, the Italian university system was mainly based on State-run universities. For a large number of courses, the duration of studies was four years, the final degree being called "Laurea". In 1990, a new kind of course was introduced, the three-year "Diploma universitario," having a more professional profile.
67. Italian Union Committee, April 10, 1990. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.

68. Italian Union Committee, February 14, 1991. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
69. 122 students in the year 1980-1981, 67 on campus. See Alessio Del Fante, "Villa Aurora," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 55, no. 12 (December 1980): 190.
70. "Intervista con Giovanni Cupertino," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 65, no. 9 (November 1990): 158.
71. "Progetto di sviluppo di Villa Aurora," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 54, no. 8-9 (August-September 1979): 120; Franco Santini, "Rapporto dell'Istituto avventista 'Villa Aurora'," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 54, no. 12 (December 1979): 180.
72. Franco Santini, "Finalmente il permesso di costruire nei campi di 'Villa Aurora'," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 55, no. 5 (May 1980): 69.
73. Italian Union Committee, April 20, 1989. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
74. Janet L. Kangas, "Euro-Africa to Receive This Quarter's Offering," *Adventist Review*, June 1, 1989, 27; Italian Union Committee, June 1, 1989. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
75. Italian Union Committee, April 10, 1990. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
76. "Intervista con Giovanni Cupertino," 158.
77. Italian Union Committee, February 14, 1991; May 9, 1991. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
78. Italian Union Committee, December 3-5, 1990. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
79. Ennio Battista, "Diamo un voto a Villa Aurora," *L'Opinione*, April 1995, V.
80. Betty Spinello, "Apertura di un nuovo anno scolastico," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 70, no. 9 (October 1995): 4.
81. "Our Missionary School in Florence, Italy, Offers Summer Course for Foreign Students June 22-July 20 and July 27-August 24," *The Atlantic Union Gleaner*, April 18, 1950, 3.
82. "Corso di italiano per stranieri," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 55, no. 4 (April 1980): 62.
83. Italian Union Committee, January 4, 1996. Italian Union Archives, Rome; Ennio Battista, "Non è l'inizio della fine," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 72, no. 3 (March 1997): 4.
84. Italian Union Committee, July 21-22, 1997. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.

85. Italian Union Committee, June 16-17, 1998. Italian Union Archives; Ignazio Barbuscia, "Villa Aurora: il punto della situazione," *Inserto de Il Messaggero Avventista* 73, no. 7 (July-August 1998): V.
86. Ignazio Barbuscia, "La scuola del servizio," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 79, no. 11 (November 2004): 9.
87. Italian Union Committee, June 15-16, 1999. Italian Union Archives, Rome; Barbuscia, "Villa Aurora: il punto della situazione," V.
88. Pierre Winandy, "Villa Aurora," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 60, no. 5-6 (May-June 1985): 78; Roberto Vacca, "Il parcheggio dei desideri," *L'Opinione*, February 1996, VIII.
89. Istituto avventista di cultura biblica Board of Trustees, Novembre 14, 2002. Istituto avventista di cultura biblica Archives, Florence, Italy.
90. Italian Union Committee, February 17-18, 2003. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
91. Italian Union Committee, February 17-18, 2004. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
92. Filippo Alma, "Sfide sì, ma con Gesù," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 80, no. 9 (October 2006): 17; Filippo Alma, "Insegnamento, diffusione dei libri e assistenza agli anziani," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 84, no. 11 (December 2009): 17.
93. Italian Union Committee, June 18-21, 2006. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.
94. Italian Union Committee, February 11-13, 2007; June 15-17, 2008; November 23-26, 2008; October 24-25, 2010. Italian Union Archives, Rome; Alma, "Sfide sì, ma con Gesù," 18; Franco Evangelisti, "Con l'impegno di tutti," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 86, no. 1 (January 2011): 19.
95. Since 1993, the Italian Union receives from the Italian State an important amount of money for social purposes, coming from the personal income tax (the "8 per Thousand"), according to the choices of the taxpayers. See Law no. 516 of 1988.
96. Italian Union Committee, November 22-24, 2010; March 22-23, 2011; November 22-24, 2011. Italian Union Archives, Rome; Luca Faedda, "Vincere l'indifferenza," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 89, no. 1 (January 2014): 19-21.
97. Gioele Murittu, "Ricomincio da otto," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 87, no. 9 (October 2012): 14.
98. Luca Faedda, "Inaugurato il Centro di Speranza," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 89, no. 3 (March 2014): 16-17.
99. In the ASR 1946, the school was listed as "Italian Training School." Then in the ASR 1953 it became "Italian Union Training School." From the ARS 1958, the IACB is included in the "Italian Union Mission" schools. From the ARS 1971, the IACB is listed together with other educational institutions of the South European Union Conference.
- Since the ARS 1978, the Theological Course is called "Italian Seminary" and is listed as a "C4" ("One to three years of post-secondary studies"); the other courses were listed separately as "+S1" ("Complete national secondary program, admitting to institutions of higher learning, with



additional worker-training courses on secondary level” , then in ARS 1979 they were listed as “+S2” (“Complete national secondary program, admitting to institutions of higher learning” ) (“(+) means that school also offers college course” ). In the ARS 1983, the Theological Course is listed as “Istituto de Cultura Biblica (Firenza)” [sic], while the other courses are listed as “Institute di Cultura Biblica (Ital. Sec. Sch.)” [sic]. Since the ARS 1984, the Theological Course is listed as “Istituto de Villa Aurora (Firenze)” [sic], while the other courses are listed as “I. Avv. Villa Aurora” [sic]. Since the ARS 1988, the category of the Theological Course passed to “T4”, which is equivalent to “C4”. Since ARS 2000 the IACB is listed as “Italian Union College” for the Theological Course, a “JC” (“A tertiary-level institution offering less than four years of post-secondary studies (not leading to a baccalaureate degree)” ), while the other courses are listed in the “Worker Training Institutions” as “Italian Union of Churches”, a “CSB” (“A complete secondary school (providing basic requirements for admission to tertiary institutions in the country), with boarding facilities” ).See *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1979, 1980, 2001).

100. Since ARS 2004 the “Italian Adventist College Villa Aurora”, a “JC”, while the other courses remain in the “Worker Training Institutions” as “Italian Union of Churches”.

Since ARS 2007 the “Italian Adventist College Villa Aurora”, a “C” (“A tertiary-level institution offering one or more baccalaureate degrees under its own authority.”

Since ARS 2009, the only entry in the education statistics for Italy is the “Italian Adventist College Villa Aurora”, “C”.

Since ARS 2015, the “Italian Adventist College Villa Aurora” is a “G” (“A tertiary-level institution offering one or more baccalaureate degrees under its own authority”).

Since ARS 2017, the IACB is “Italian Adventist University Villa Aurora,” a “G”

101. The history of this achievement started in 1988, when the IACB received a formal certificate of accreditation. Up to June 30, 1989, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Board of Regents accredited the “Istituto Avventista Villa Aurora” as a “secondary and tertiary institution.” In July 1, 1990, this status was confirmed through to May 31, 1994. Then, it was the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and University (AAA) that extended the accreditation from August 31, 1996, to June 30, 1997, to the “Italian Junior College.” From July 2, 1998 to December 31, 2001, the AAA granted accreditation to the “Istituto Adventista Villa Aurora Seminario di Teologia,” as a “Level I” institution, “offering post-secondary courses leading to one to three year diploma and certificates.” This status was confirmed from April 3, 2003, to December 31, 2006 to the “Italian Theological Seminary.”

From April 5, 2007, to December 31, 2008, the “Istituto Avventista di Cultura Biblica Villa Aurora” was accredited as a “Level II” institution, offering “post-secondary courses and programs leading to three to five year college/university degrees.”

102. The implementation decree of the Ministero dell’istruzione, dell’università e della ricerca (MIUR) (Ministry of Education, University, and Research) of November 30, 2010, explicitly mentions the “Facoltà avventista di teologia” (“Adventist School of Theology”). At the moment, the Italian government recognizes the following IACB degrees in theology, in line with the Bologna Protocol:

Laurea in teologia (a three-year degree in theology);

Laurea magistrale in teologia, indirizzo Pastorale della famiglia (a two-year post-graduate degree in theology, emphasis in Family Pastoral Care);

Laurea magistrale in teologia, indirizzo Religione, diritti e società (a two-year post-graduate degree in theology, emphasis in Religion, Rights and Society).

In parallel with this course of action, with the academic year 2000-2001, the IACB created its "Facoltà di teologia" ("School of Theology"), making the transfer to Collonges to complete the academic pastoral training no longer compulsory. IACB took steps to get the division's approval. On November 4, 2002, the EUD Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (BMTE) gave authorization to the third year of the theology program, and on November 4, 2003, it authorized a pilot experience for two additional years. This experience was evaluated and approved by the EUD BMTE on November 3, 2009. See Tiziano Rimoldi, "In piena facoltà," *Il Messaggero Avventista* 86, no. 3 (March 2011): 21; Tiziano Rimoldi, "Il riconoscimento dei titoli di studio rilasciati dall'Istituto avventista di cultura biblica," *Coscienza e Libertà* 32, no. 43 (2009): 124-137; Italian Union Committee, January 11-12, 2000. Italian Union Archives, Rome, Italy.

103. John C. Thompson, "Italian Union Training School," *ARH*, September 6, 1956: 19: "Founded in 1940, and at its present location since 1947, the training school for the Italian Union is situated in a beautiful old villa on the periphery of historic and artistic Florence, a city of 400,000. It would be difficult to imagine a more stimulating environment in which to study. Occupying one of the famed Tuscany Hills of literature, four miles from the centre of Florence, Villa Aurora, now our school, was first mentioned in history seventy-five years before the Genoese Italian, Christopher Columbus, discovered America [...].The future of this training centre seems promising in this ancient land of culture and of apostate Christianity"; Kenneth H. Wood, Jr., "Italy and Switzerland," *ARH*, September 5, 1963, p. 3:"The Istituto does not have a large enrollment—only about 35—but everywhere we have been in Italy we have met workers who received their preparatory training there before going to Collonges for further study."

104. Beer, "A Report from the Garden Spot of Europe," 7.

105. *Annual Statistical Report*, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,

<https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fStatistics%2fASR&FolderCTID=0x01200095DE8DF0FA49904B9D6521>

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