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Northern Asia-Pacific Division

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The Northern Asia-Pacific Division is one of the thirteen divisions of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The territory of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD) encompasses the People's Republic of China (including Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Macao Special Administrative Region), Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, and Taiwan; comprising the Japan Union Conference, the Korean Union Conference, the Chinese Union Mission, the Taiwan Conference, and the Mongolia Mission.¹

In the second quarter of 2019,² the NSD had a total of 2,129 organized churches and 3,466 companies. Church membership at the end of the period was 747,379. The NSD and its unions, conferences, and mission, including all institutions, had 15,322 active employees as of December 2018.³ The total tithe receipts for the NSD in 2018 were US\$81,703,000; tithe per capita was US\$110 (US\$286 excluding China membership).⁴

Organizational History

Ever since the China Division became unable to continue its organized work after the political change in China mainland in 1949, the idea of establishing another division in the territory of East Asia remained alive in the thoughts of the General Conference. Periodically through the years, the General Conference reviewed the situation of the Seventh-day Adventist work in China to determine whether the time had come for the world church to again take a more active role in its relationship to the work in China.

The Asia-Pacific Division (APD), knowing the constant awareness of the General Conference regarding the possibility of establishing another division in the East Asia area, thought it might be prudent to enquire of the General Conference regarding this matter. Early in 1996, The APD officers raised their concerns to the General Conference president first and then, later, to other officers regarding the matter, seeking to know whether the General Conference had any plans to realign the territories of the Asia-Pacific Division in the near future.

The General Conference officers considered the matter and concluded that the General Conference should set up a survey commission to study the entire situation. The proposal for a survey commission was then presented to the General Conference Administrative Committee.⁵

On February 20, 1996, the General Conference Administrative Committee met and voted to set up the Survey Commission on Territorial Realignment for the APD. It was decided that the survey team would meet with the leaders in various territories of the APD to conduct a survey during the latter part of April and the early part of May that year. The interviews with the leaders were scheduled and conducted in various locations, including Hong Kong, Bangkok, Singapore, Manila, Tokyo, and Korea.

The Survey Commission on Territorial Realignment undertook its work in awareness of the following factors⁶

In 1997 Hong Kong would become part of mainland China. Should our work as a church in China, which heretofore had been linked directly to the General Conference, be included within the structures of a division that would encompass all or some of the territories that today make up the Asia-Pacific Division?

Asia-Pacific Division's current headquarters property in Singapore was undergoing major redevelopment. It is a high-cost area. Would moving the division headquarters out of Singapore enable the church to use its assets more effectively in the mission of the church?

After these interviews had been completed and the data reviewed, the survey commission agreed unanimously to make the following recommendations:⁷

Divide the territory of the Asia-Pacific Division into two divisions: a northern division and a southern division.

Make the territory of the East Asia Association (including China and Mongolia) a part of the northern division. The East Asia Association's direct connection with the General Conference would cease.

Organize the two new divisions to include the following territories: the Northern division would include East Asia Association (the People's Republic of China and Mongolia), Japan Union Conference, Korean Union Conference, and South China Island Union Mission; the Southern division would include Bangladesh Union Mission, Central Philippine Union Mission, East Indonesia Union Mission, Myanmar Union Mission, North Philippine Union Mission, Southeast Asia Union Mission, South Philippine Union Conference, West Indonesia Union Mission, and two attached missions (Guam Micronesia Mission and Sri Lanka Mission).

Locate the northern division headquarters in the vicinity of the Greater Seoul area of South Korea and place the southern division headquarters' office in the vicinity of Greater Manila, Philippines.

The survey commission brought their recommendations to the APD Midyear Committee on May 9, 1996, in Manado, Indonesia, and it was voted to record the report of the Asia-Pacific Division Territorial Realignment Commission and to request the General Conference to approve the report and the recommendations.

On May 16, 1996, the General Conference Administrative Committee approved the report of the APD Territorial Realignment Commission and recommended that it be approved at the General Conference Annual Council in Costa

Rica.

The General Conference also set up the APD Transition Management Committee. The major function of this committee would involve the purchase of property and the establishment of two division offices and the dividing of the assets between the two new divisions.

In June 1996, the Transition Management Committee, the APD officers, and the union presidents of the northern division did a site search, and a site was selected in the vicinity of Seoul, Korea, to be the new headquarters for the northern division.

On October 6, 1996, the General Conference Annual Council voted to approve the dividing of APD into a northern division and a southern division, to include the territory of the East Asia Association as part of the northern division, and to terminate the East Asia Affairs Committee, effective January 1, 1997. The GC also voted to designate the name of the northern division as "Northern Asia-Pacific Division" with the identification letters NSD and the southern division as "Southern Asia-Pacific Division" with the identification letters SSD.⁸

On November 24, 1996, the APD Annual Council in Penang, Malaysia, officially voted to record the GC Annual Council action to divide the Asia-Pacific Division into the Northern Asia-Pacific Division and Southern Asia-Pacific Division respectively and to designate the territories of the East Asia Association, the Japan Union Conference, the Korean Union Conference, and the South China Island Union Mission as the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD), effective January 1, 1997.⁹ The APD Annual Council also voted to record the GC action to reclassify the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) as a General Conference institution with a special attachment to the Asian and Pacific regions. It was voted to designate the 1000 Missionary Movement as a bi-division institution of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division and the Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

It was also decided at the 1996 APD Annual Council that the APD would be officially divided into two divisions, and as soon as the two new division committees were formed, they would begin to function in their own annual councils. Separate minutes would be recorded beginning November 26, 1996. The APD committee and office staff would continue to function until December 31, 1996. At that time, the APD would cease to function as a division. Both the Northern and Southern Asia-Pacific Divisions were to continue operating from the same office in Suntec City, Singapore, until the Northern Asia-Pacific Division office moved to Korea in early 1997 and the Southern Asia-Pacific Division office moved to the Philippines sometime in early 1998.

On April 6, 1997, the NSD voted to purchase a flat on the 5th floor of Sam Hee Plaza, Ilsan-gu, Gyeonggi-do, Korea. All NSD officers, departmental directors, and staff moved to the new office from Singapore and started operating in the new office on June 17, 1997. The official opening ceremony of the new office was conducted on July 20, 1997.¹⁰

Merger of East Asia Association (EAA) and South China Island Union Mission (SCIUM)

On October 4, 1998, the General Conference Annual Council appointed a Northern Asia-Pacific Division Union Reorganization Survey Commission to consider the merger of East Asia Association and South China Island Union Mission. The commission met on December 16, 1998, and made the recommendation to merge the East Asia Association (China) and the South China Island Union Mission (Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan) to create a Pan-Chinese Union. The commission also voted to recommend attaching the territory of Mongolia to the Northern Asia-Pacific Division. This recommendation was later approved at the General Conference Administrative Committee. The Northern Asia-Pacific Division Midyear Committee on May 3, 1999, officially recorded the merging of the two organizations and named the new union the Chinese Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists, which officially started to function on June 13, 1999. At the same time, the Midyear Committee also voted to accept the country of Mongolia as an attached mission field of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division.¹¹

Reorganization of Japan Union Conference

To revitalize evangelism and improve the financial situation in Japan, the Northern Asia-Pacific Division at its 1998 Midyear Committee granted the reorganization plan of the Japan Union Conference. Under this reorganization, the functions of the local conference secretary, treasurer, and departmental functions became the responsibility of the union conference. The local conferences have only one officer, the president, whose major responsibility is to oversee evangelism and pastoral work within the conference. The finances and employment of ministers and other workers are administered by the Japan Union Conference. The name of the conference Executive Committee was changed to Evangelism Committee.¹²

Grant of Conference Status to Taiwan Mission

On May 16–17, 2001, the Northern Asia-Pacific Division Midyear Committee voted to set up a Taiwan Mission Conference Candidacy Status Review Committee to review whether Taiwan Mission was financially self-supporting, with strong working capital and liquidity and stable tithe income, and strong pastoral and administrative leadership. It had been granted conference candidacy status for more than seven years but had not been able to achieve the

necessary requirement to be granted full conference status. At the 2001 NSD Annual Council in November 2001, it was voted to change the status of the Taiwan Mission from conference candidacy status back to mission status.¹³ Three years later, at the 2004 NSD Annual Council, on November 5, Taiwan Mission was finally granted full conference status, effective December 2004.¹⁴

Reorganization of the Chinese Union Mission

The issue of reorganization of the Chinese Union Mission has been the focus of discussion at the General Conference and the Northern Asia-Pacific Division since 2007, and the General Conference sent a taskforce and survey team to both Taiwan and Hong Kong to listen to different opinions from various entities within the Chinese Union Mission about realignment of the union's territory. The objective of the process of reorganization is to enhance the work in China and strengthen the work in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan.

On September 13, 2012, a special NSD Executive Committee was called and voted unanimously to send the following recommendations to the General Conference:¹⁵

1. The current union mission status of the Chinese Union Mission be retained.
2. The Hong Kong-Macao Conference (HKMC) and union institutions in Hong Kong remain under the jurisdiction of the Chinese Union Mission.
3. The unorganized mission field of China all remain a part of the Chinese Union Mission.
4. The Taiwan Conference (TWC) and union institutions in Taiwan be attached to the Northern Asia-Pacific Division.
5. The above reorganization be effective on January 1, 2013.

These recommendations were approved by the 2012 General Conference Annual Council and were adopted and recorded at the 2012 Northern Asia-Pacific Division Annual Council on November 1, 2012.¹⁶ A Transition Management Committee was appointed on the same day to ensure the smooth transfer of governance of TWC and the union institutions in Taiwan from the Chinese Union Mission to the Northern Asia-Pacific Division.

Reconfiguration of the Territory of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division and Attachment of the Chinese Union Mission to the General Conference

Since standard denominational structures and relationships do not currently operate in China, it has been challenging for the Chinese Union Mission to participate in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division forums and decision-making as per the patterns of normal denominational organization. In light of this, consideration has been given to reorganizing the territory of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division by attaching the Chinese Union Mission directly to the General Conference and authorizing the Chinese Union Mission to adopt internal oversight structures under the provisions of General Conference Working Policy B 10 28, paragraph 6, dealing with Special Alternative Organizations.

On March 13, 2018, the General Conference Administrative Committee (ADCOM) appointed a survey commission to study alternative structures to improve mission effectiveness in the areas currently served by the Chinese Union Mission. A report was presented to and received by GC ADCOM on September 25, 2018, and the following was voted:

VOTED, To receive the report of the Chinese Union Mission Survey Commission and to assign further adjustments to this proposal to the General Conference executive officers, in consultation with the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, before the General Conference executive officers provide a final recommendation to the General Conference Administrative Committee which will then be presented to the 2019 Spring Meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee.

After several consultations with the Northern Asia-Pacific Division and Chinese Union Mission leadership by the General Conference executive officers, the following actions were recommended and approved during the 2019 General Conference Annual Council on October 13.¹⁷

1. To approve the realignment of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division territory, as follows:

Reconfigure, effective immediately, the territory of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division by removing China, including Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions, from the division territory.

Attach, effective October 13, 2019, the Chinese Union Mission to the General Conference.

2. The General Conference will give study, in consultation with the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, the Chinese Union Mission, and the Taiwan Conference, to the future status of the Taiwan Conference in relation to the restructuring process.

The above actions were officially recorded at the 2019 Northern Asia-Pacific Division Annual Council on November 7, 2019. The Northern Asia-Pacific Division and the Chinese Union Mission will start a new working relationship. Leaders of both organizations expressed their commitment to continue the collaboration and support with each other for future mission endeavors.

List of Executive Officers

Presidents: Pyung Duk Chun (1997–2003); Jairyong Lee (2003–2017); Si Young Kim (2017–)

Secretaries: Eugene King-Yi Hsu (1997); Richard Liu (1997–2000); Stanley Wai-Chun Ng (2000–2005); Akeri Suzuki (2005–2015); Yutaka Inada (2015–)

Treasurers: Duane Rollins (1997); R. Martin Moores (1997–2005); Don Upson (2005–2008); Clyde Iverson (2008–2010); Ken Osborn (2010–2015); German Lust (2015–2018); Joel Tompkins (2018–)

The headquarters of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division is located at 121 Gangseong-ro, Sam Hee Plaza (5th Floor), Ilsanseo-gu; Goyang-si, Gyeonggi-do 10386; Republic of Korea. In 2009, the NSD purchased a property at Yadang-dong, Paju-si, Gyeonggi-do, Republic of Korea, and planned to build a new office building on this property by the end of 2019.

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NOTES

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2. *Secretary's Statistical Report—Second Quarter 2019*, Northern Asia-Pacific Division.?
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