



North Philippine Union Conference administrative building.

Photo courtesy of North Philippine Union Conference Archives.

North Philippine Union Conference

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North Philippine Union Conference is an organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church which is a non-stock and non-profit religious corporation under the laws of the Republic of the Philippines. North Philippine Union Conference was organized in 1917, then reorganized in 1951 and 2009. It covers the following territories: Abra, Albay, Apayao, Aurora, Bataan, Batanes, Batangas, Benguet, Bulacan, Burias, Cagayan, Camarines Norte,

Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Cavite, Ifugao, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Isabela, Kalinga, La Union, Laguna, Marinduque, Mountain Province, Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Palawan, Pampanga, Pangasinan, Quezon, Quirino, Rizal, Sorsogon, Tarlac, and Zambales Provinces, and the National Capital Region; comprising the Central Luzon, and South-Central Luzon Conferences; and the Cavite, Mountain Provinces, Northeast Luzon, Northern Luzon, Palawan, and Southern Luzon Missions. The North Philippine Union Conference headquarters is in Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines.¹

Statistics (June 30, 2019): Churches, 1,506; membership, 403,896; population, 58,753,589²

Organizational History

Adventism came into the Philippine shore in 1905. While in Singapore, Robert A. Caldwell, a literature evangelist missionary, received a call from the Adventist world church headquarters in Maryland in the United States to go to the Philippines.³ He arrived in Manila on August 24, 1905.⁴ As his ship entered Manila Bay, he fixed his eyes for the first time on the great walled city with its teeming population. Seeing this, he was greatly moved and said, "I will sprinkle books and then like yeast they will begin to work." This was the first ink mark of a tremendous story that is still being written in the lives of men and women in the Philippines. This was the beginning of Adventism in the islands of the Philippines. The work started in Manila with the unselfish efforts of the first foreign missionaries.

In 1906, the McElhany and the Finsters actively continued the work in winning people for the Master in the Philippines. As the fruit of their labors, the Central Luzon Mission was organized to facilitate the Gospel work among Filipinos in 1908. Hard work and dedicated ministry were considered worthwhile when on March 11, 1911, the first Adventist Church in the Philippines was established at Sta. Ana, Manila. It started with a membership consisting of 12 baptized converts, including six other Filipinos who were accepted by profession of faith and four missionaries—the Finsters and the Caldwells. Then, L. V. Finster trained the first three Filipino pastors, namely Bibiano Panis, Leon Roda, and Emilio Manalaysay, who played significant roles in the history of the growth of Adventism in the Islands. They were ordained to the Gospel ministry of the Adventist Church in 1919. Panis shared the leadership of the work and even became the associate editor of *Ang Tanglaw (The Lamp)*, one of the first evangelistic magazines published that circulated throughout the country in the dialect.

The church expanded with Finster as administrator of the work in Manila; Hay in Vigan, Ilocos Sur; Fattebert and Stewart opened the work in Cebu City; and Adams with Jornada followed up the interests created by the young literature evangelist Ashbaugh in Jaro, Iloilo, thus encircling the whole of Panay Island.

A request was made to the General Conference, before World War II broke out, to divide the Philippines into two union missions for more efficient administration. The war broke out before an action could be taken on that request. In 1950, the request was revived and approved. A year later, the request was carried out.⁵

The Union that was to administer the island of Luzon was named the North Philippine Union Mission, and that was for the Visayas, Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago, the South Philippine Union Mission. The North Philippine Union Mission, with its three institutions (Manila Sanitarium and Hospital, Philippine Publishing House, and Philippine Union College) and the majority of its department heads (Sabbath School, Lay Activities, Youth, Medical, Education, Publishing, Religious Liberty, Ministerial, Radio-TV) continued under overseas missionary leadership. The presidency of the local missions, except Mountain Provinces Mission, was in Filipino hands.⁶

Today, there are three Unions overseeing the organized work of Adventists in the Philippines: North Philippine Union Conference (Pasay City), Central Philippine Union Conference (Cebu City), and South Philippine Union Conference (Cagayan de Oro City).

The growth of the Adventist Church in the Philippines has been impressive. From 22 members in 1911, it grew to 13,537 in 1930 to 34,611 in 1950. As Adventists marked 100 years in the Philippines in 2005, the church recorded a total baptism of 1,012,144.

Adventism was born through a humble colporteur from Australia, Robert A. Caldwell, more than a hundred years ago. From its first church in Sta. Ana, Manila, Adventism inched its way from corner to corner; from one city to the other; from island to island; from Luzon to Visayas and Mindanao. To date, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is found in practically all major cities and municipalities of the Philippines. On record, NPUC now has a total membership of 358,156. While the Union understands its commission to gather all people under her wings, we find its numerical growth dwarfed by the country's overwhelming population explosion. Notwithstanding its size, however, the Union continues to carve a prestigious image in the community through its educational and medical institutions as well as health and welfare services all over the island. NPUC leads in the operation of one publishing house and supervises one university, four colleges, thirteen academies, and 161 elementary schools. It has three hospitals: the Adventist Medical Center Manila, Adventist Medical Center Santiago, and Adventist Medical Center Palawan, although for management purposes, all three are now under NPUC supervision.

By the turn of the millennium, NPUC has become a Union with two Conferences (Central Luzon and South-Central Luzon Conferences) and five Missions (Mountain Provinces, Northern Luzon, Northeast Luzon, Palawan, and Southern Luzon) with total of 1,480 churches. Serving the Union in various ministries and capabilities are ordained pastors, regular ministerial workers, teachers, literature evangelists, medical and paramedical personnel, publishing workers, and a host of office staffers in the Union, Mission, and institution headquarters.

Through the years, NPUC has accomplished wonderful achievements. There were four overseas missionaries who became presidents of NPUC. Since 1972, there were nine Filipinos who became president of the Union. The accomplishments of NPUC has been a contribution of people who were placed in the leadership position and were dependent on the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In 1951 to 1955, M. C. Warren, a former missionary in China, was the first president of the North Philippine Union. He contributed to the groundwork for the establishment and dedication of Northeast Luzon Mission office and acquisition of land site for an educational institution in Bukidnon, which is Mountain View College (MVC), as well as the raising of funds for the building of Manila Evangelistic Center, conducting an intensive campaign for support to Christian education program, splitting the Philippine Union Mission to two new Union Missions – South and North Philippine Union Missions, expanding and remodeling the Manila Sanitarium and Hospital, establishing the Masla SDA Clinic in Bontoc, and the remodeling and enlarging of the South Central Luzon Mission office in Lucena.⁷

W. J. Hackett, a former youth director of the Far Eastern Division, replaced Warren in 1956 and continued the inspired leadership up to 1958. He organized the Mountain Provinces Mission, incorporated the Manila Sanitarium and Hospital, adapted Field Adventuring as tool for lay evangelism, (legal status of church schools became a challenge), established a rural academy in Naga City, merged the Northeast Luzon Mission and Northern Luzon Mission into one Mission, vigorously promoted the Vacation Bible School plan throughout the North Philippine Union Mission (NPUM), began the construction of the Evangelistic Center building, closed the Pollilo Adventist Institute, and purchased the land for Northeast Luzon Academy in Alicia, Isabela. The Board of Trustees of the Philippine Union Mission and NPUM Corporation also was elected, and NPUM Missions and Institutions were registered to Social Security System.⁸

Andrew J. Robbins was president from 1959–1962. He worked for the establishment of a Chaplaincy department in all major medical institutions, expanded the Manila Sanitarium and Hospital, opened the Cagayan Valley Sanitarium and Hospital to the public, oversaw meetings in the Evangelistic Center for NPUM, developed Mt. Isarog Academy (now Naga View Adventist College), managed an upsurge in Vacation Bible School work, revived tract distribution through home visitation, reorganized some church schools into multigrade schools with authorization from the Bureau of Private Schools, relocated the proposed Philippine Union College, transferred Northeast Luzon Academy from Divisoria, Santiago, Isabela, to Paddad, Alicia, Isabela, prepared flannel graph pictures and mimeographed lessons and stories printed to promote Sabbath School evangelism in NPUM, made efforts to stem the tide of religious persecution made by producing and circulating the religious liberty magazine *FREEDOM* among legislators of national, provincial, and municipal governments, and promoted important advancement in the Radio-TV & Bible Correspondence School.⁹

In 1963–1971, T. C. Murdoch, president of Mountain View College, took over the leadership of the Union. He accomplished the transfer of South-Central Luzon Mission office from Lucena to San Pablo, Laguna; organized the remodeling of the NPUM office; ordered the installation of new and modern equipment at Philippine Publishing House; opened Naga View Academy, Abra Valley Junior Academy (now Tirad View Academy), and Palawan Adventist Academy; obtained equipment for schools in NPUM and Central and South Philippines; helped gain government recognition for the national Service Organization for its medical Cadet Corp. Philippine legislators used *FREEDOM* magazine to promote a religious instruction bill introduction in the Philippine House

of Representatives that will authorize public school teachers to use time to teach religion to public school pupils in public school buildings. He also organized the Public Relations, Stewardship, and Religious Liberty departments; held monthly baptisms at the Manila Evangelistic Center; and started the Voice of Prophecy radio program in Tagalog over DZBB (a radio broadcasting network in Manila).¹⁰

From 1972 to 1974, M. G. Jereos worked for the rebuilding and renovation of NPUM office at Pasay, purchased land for Palawan Adventist Clinic, conducted the First Quadrennial Session of NPUM, and oversaw a Feasibility Study for Palawan Mission and the establishment of a Chinese Evangelistic Center.

In 1975–1979, F. M. Arrogante contributed in the organization of Ministers' Wives club, introduced one-to-one evangelism using Voice of Prophecy lessons, opened Lipa Adventist Academy (under South-Central Luzon Mission) and Concepcion Jr. Academy (under Mountain Provinces Mission), started Teacher-School evaluations, launched the Student Missionary Program, organized Church territorial assignments, and organized Abram La Rue Club in NPUM.

From 1979–1987, N. P. Arit managed evangelism in the unentered territory among the Bot-bot tribe of Mt. Province, resulting in peace and order situation between warring tribes in that area. During that time, church members built more beautiful churches in the different parts of the field, the Batanes Islands received many different kinds of Adventist literature, a company of believers was established in provincial penitentiaries, the 1000 Days of Reaping program through Voice of Prophecy correspondence course was promoted, churches were planted in barrios and barangays, Philippine Union College was transferred from the Baesa campus to the Silang campus, Intensive Care Unit was established in the Manila Sanitarium and Hospital (made possible by donations solicited by its chief administrator Dr. Domondon from Queen Medical Center of Hawaii) the Adventist Junior Youth Society was replaced with the Pathfinder Club, the Adventist-Laymen Services and Industries were organized in NPUM, and the Trust Services for the first time has brought in material blessings to the Lord's treasury through more than 1 million in assets acquired in cash and in kind.

Moreover, in 1988–1996, E. M. Macalintal organized the SDA Health Professionals Organization, and made negotiations with government officials for the Nursing and Medical Board Exams to be moved to non-Sabbath schedules. Also, the Philippine Publishing House purchased state-of-the-art Equipment, updated training of literature evangelists was instituted, the Literature Ministry Seminary building was established in Bugtong, Lipa, Batangas, the first quinquennial session was held, the Central Luzon Mission became a Conference, the Detwiler's Library at Philippine Union College was constructed, the Mountain Provinces Mission's Housing project was almost completed, church membership hit 500,000 mark and the celebration for this milestone was held in Davao, the General Conference inspired-global strategy evangelism program was started for reaching the unreached, and an Adventist presence in unentered territories was established. The Northern Luzon Academy in Artacho, Sison, Pangasinan, was elevated to senior college under the name Northern Luzon Adventist College and was the first educational institution of NPUC to access the government financial

assistance called Educational Service Contracting and the fencing of the whole 160 hectare compound of the Philippine Union College in Silang, Cavite was completed.

In 1997–1999, D. B. Viloso made the following accomplishments: Philippine Union College was accorded university status by the Commission on Higher Education and thus became Adventist University of the Philippines, the Bureau of Internal Revenue & Eternal Gardens cases were settled where the Supreme Court ruled that NPUM be paid 330 million pesos by the Eternal Gardens, the Adventist University of the Philippines Academy's new high school building was completed, the Field Ministerial Workers' Performance Appraisal was implemented, new computers were acquired and Internet connection was established, the construction of the Mountain Provinces Mission's Multipurpose Hall was started, the spiritual revival of NPUM constituency was prioritized, and a small group evangelism strategy through two by two teams was launched. The NPUM Health Department received government recognition (from the Philippine Department of Health) for the Church's NEWSTART, Smoking Cessation, Cancer Prevention, AIDS Awareness, SAD Connection and Environmental Programs. An extension of Cagayan Valley Sanitarium and Hospital's medical services was made possible through the establishment of its clinic in Aurora, Cagayan Valley, and the Children's and Family Ministries was created. Also, the Adventist University of the Philippines - Northeast Luzon campus was allowed to offer additional post-secondary technical/short term courses and was renamed Northeast Luzon Adventist School of Technology. Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Director Pastor Bienvenido V. Tejano was appointed as Philippine Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, and the Memorandum of Agreement was signed for modernization of Palawan Adventist Hospital courtesy of SPEX – Shell Philippines.

From 2000–2005, N. D. Dayson worked to relieve the financial indebtedness of Manila Sanitarium and Hospital to Bank of the Philippine Islands, three medical institutions were managed under NPUM: Manila Adventist Medical Center (formerly Manila Sanitarium and Hospital) The Cagayan Valley Sanitarium & Hospital and Palawan Adventist Hospital were turned over to Adventist Health System-Asia, the Manila Sanitarium & Hospital was renamed Manila Adventist Medical Center, the Cagayan Valley Sanitarium & Hospital was called Cagayan Valley Adventist Hospital, and Naga View College became Naga View Adventist College. Additional facilities were added to Palawan Adventist Hospital to accommodate state-of-the-art equipment donated by SPEX-Shell Philippines, the PRC Modernization Act 2000 was initiated by an Adventist legislator from Samar, Congressman Harlin C. Abayon, and it was passed into law. Otherwise known as Republic Act 8981, in part it sanctioned that examinations shall be held only on weekdays, thereby benefiting Sabbath-keepers The South Central Luzon Mission became a conference, NPUM accepted Palawan as attached District, uniform designs for town, city and barangay churches were implemented, and church construction and beautification was intensified. The NPUM headquarters were also renovated, 11 new rooms for NPUM guest house were constructed, Eternal Gardens settled its monetary obligation with NPUM, the Court of Appeals issued a favorable verdict to Adventist University of the Philippines regarding the case filed by P. Barayuga, the National Labor Relations Commission Case filed by D. Sabaupan and Atty. M. Bustamante was declared null and void, Livelihood programs were

intensified, Naga View Academy was elevated into a full-fledged senior college status, full operation of 3 ABN TV station was realized, and the Media Center at the NPUM Headquarters was created. The Philippine Publishing House initiated the printing and production of the first in the series of Filipino authored adult devotional book entitled *Living by Grace*.

In 2006–2010, North Philippine Union Mission became a Conference under the able leadership of Pastor Abner S. Roque, president, and Pastor Nephtali Mañez, executive secretary, and Mr. Romero Daquila, treasurer. This actually took effect on July 1, 2009. The Executive Committee of the General Conference granted the Union this status on April 6 during the 2009 Spring Council of the World Church of the Seventh-day Adventists at Old Columbia Pike, Maryland, U.S.A. On the onset of its office in 2005, the NPUM administration, among its grand goals, has worked to gain Conference status. Hence, after the Conference status application was acted in the Union executive committee, it was endorsed to the SSD Executive Committee for evaluation, including an examination of whether NPUM had met the standards and other necessary requirements for Conference status. After a thorough preliminary evaluation, the SSD elevated the application for final approval to the General Conference. A General Conference Commission was immediately formed by the World Church, with the commission evaluating NPUM last February 4–5, 2005 for the aforementioned purpose.

In 2011–2015, Nephtali J. Manez became the second president of the Conference. As chairperson, the new 7-story Manila Adventist College building was approved by the board, and the groundbreaking and construction began. The College of Medicine of the Adventist University of the Philippines was opened with 22 pioneering students. The University was awarded, by the Commission of Higher Education, an Autonomous Status for its meritorious achievement in the provision and instruction, research, community extension services, high performance of graduates in licensure examinations, and for maintaining a tradition of integrity, excellence, and untarnished reputation in educational service. Hope Channel Luzon for NPUC and the renovation of the third floor of the headquarters to be the studio was also made possible. The old Northern Luzon Mission was split into two local Mission territories. The western portion of the old Northern Luzon Mission is now the new Northern Luzon Mission, while the eastern portion was called Northeast Luzon Attached Field. A 5-hectare property in Legaspi City was purchased to facilitate the possibility of relocating the current Southern Luzon Mission Office to that new site.

In 2016, Romeo T. Mangiliman took over the leadership, and one of its achievements has been the organization of Northeast Luzon Attached Field into a full-fledged Mission. With Adventist Hospital—Santiago the medical service provider of TESDA¹¹ Santiago City, the base hospital has signed a memorandum of understanding with Philippine Health Insurance Corporation standing with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Region 2 regarding bloodletting. Adventist Hospital—Palawan expanded to offer two additional services—a renal care unit and an ear diagnostic center. The Philippine Congress has renewed the franchise of the channel 45 as provider for Hope Channel Philippines.¹²

Executive Officers Chronology

President: M. C. Warren, 1951–1955; W. J. Hackett, 1956–1958; A. J. Robbins, 1959–1962; Todd C. Murdoch, 1963–1971; Moise G. Jereos, 1972–1974; F. M. Arrogante, 1975–1979; Nestor P. Arit, 1979–1987; E. M. Macalintal, 1988–1996; Daniel B. Viloso, 1997–1999; Nestor D. Dayson, 2000–2005; Abner S. Roque, 2006–2010; Nepthali J. Mañez, 2011–2015; Romeo T. Mangiliman, 2016–.

Vice President: J. O. Bautista, 1955.

Secretary-Treasurer: R. C. Mills, 1951–1955; H. L. Dyer, 1955–1957; H. D. Johnson, 1957–1959; H. M. Baldwin, 1959–1966; M. G. Jereos, 1967–1971; G. E. Bullock, 1972–1975.

Secretary: N. R. Arit, 1977–1979; T. V. Barizo, 1980–1987; D. B. Viloso, 1988–1995; N. D. Dayson, 1996–2000; A. S. Roque, 2001–2003; M. B. delos Reyes, 2003–2005; N. J. Manez, 2005–2010; F. D. Gayoba, 2011; N. D. de Chavez 2011–2016; Arnelia A. Gabin, 2016–.

Treasurer: B. O. Gravino, 1976–1977; E. C. Corpuz, 1978–1985; E. M. Macalintal, 1986–1987; G. B. Espelita, 1988–1996; J. L. Malalis, 1997–2000; T. D. Dayahan, 2001–2005; R. A. Daquila, 2006–2010; F. D. Tabelisma, 2011–2013; R. J. Velasco, 2014– .

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Transcript of the state of the conference address of the NPUC president, Philippine International Church, the campus of the Adventist University of the Philippines, November 26, 2016. The Adventist University of the Philippines archives, Silang, Cavite.

NOTES

1. "North Philippine Union Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2020), <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=13431>.

2. Ibid.
3. E. M. Graham, "Australia," *ARH*, July 19, 1906, 13.
4. R. A. Caldwell, "Letter from the Philippines," *Australian Union Conference Record*. November 15, 1905, 4.
5. Gil G. Fernandez, ed. *Light Dawns Over Asia: Adventism's Story in the Far Eastern Division 1888-1988* (Silang, Cavite, Philippines: Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies Publications, 1990), 152-153.
6. Ibid.
7. Nestor C. Rilloma and Jose F. Sarzosa, Jr., *100 Years Back to the Future; Celebrating God's Goodness* (Manila, Philippines: Philippine Publishing House, 2005), 43-46.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Technical Education Skills and Development Authority.
12. Transcript of the state of the conference address of the NPUC president, Philippine International Church, the campus of the Adventist University of the Philippines, November 26, 2016, the Adventist University of the Philippines archives, Silang, Cavite.

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