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Central Mexican Union Mission is one of the Seventh-day Adventist unions in the Republic of Mexico. Its territory
includes the states of Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Mexico, Mexico City, Michoacán, and Querétaro plus the northern portion of the state of Guerrero.

Central Mexican Union Mission is one of the Seventh-day Adventist unions in the Republic of Mexico. Its territory includes the states of Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Mexico, Mexico City, Michoacán, and Querétaro plus the northern portion of the state of Guerrero. Its area’s total population is 47,115,933. The main language of this territory is Spanish. A number of communities in the states of Mexico, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Michoacán, and Querétaro preserve their native languages, which include Amuzgo, Chichimeca Jonaz, Maya, Mazahua, Mazateco, Mixtec, Nahua, Otomi, Pame, Purépecha, Tapaneco, Totonac, and Zapotec.

In June 2018, Central Mexican Union Mission was comprised of Azteca Mexican Conference, Bajío Mexican Conference, Metropolitan Mexican Conference, Valley Mexican Mission, and Mexiquense Mission. The union had 86,886 members, 244 churches, 153 organized companies, 79 pastoral districts, 303 church buildings, 57 ordained pastors, 42 licensed ministers, 44 workers with missionary licenses, 70 workers with missionary credentials, 48 colporteurs, and 130 teachers in five schools. Its institutions included a hospital offering medical services to the community, a campground, and a publishing house named GEMA Editores.

Organizational History

In 1891, Salvador Marchisio, a colporteúr, arrived to introduce the Adventist message to Mexico City. In the Mixcoac area, “Steps to Christ” went up in flames in what became the first book burning, but that did not hinder the spread of the message. In the fall of 1891, L. C. Chadwick published two articles in “The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald” about visiting Mexico on his way to Argentina.

On February 17, 1893, the General Conference voted to send a missionary group to begin church work in Mexico. Dan T. Jones visited the country to find a location for a medical mission. In January 1894, the first group of workers arrived, including Jones and his family, Lilis Wood and Idada Crawford as a medical team, and Ora Osborne as a teacher. They founded a clinic and a school in the city of Guadalajara. In 1895, Dr. J. H. Neall joined this group.

Up to that moment, all publications were in English, and the workers were English speakers. In 1896, the first Spanish Seventh-day Adventist periodical, El amigo de la verdad (“The Friend of Truth”), was published. In 1901, it changed its name to El mensajero de la verdad (“The Messenger of Truth”).

In 1897, George W. Caviness, former president of Battle Creek College, and his wife arrived in Guadalajara. Caviness was assigned to translate the Bible into Spanish while his wife was assigned to work in education. With the active support of Dr. J. H. Kellogg, Guadalajara Sanitarium opened its doors in 1899. Caviness and the non-medical workers moved to Mexico City and located in Tacubaya in the same year.

As the Adventist work in Mexico was rapidly growing, in 1903, the General Conference organized Mexican Mission with George M. Brown as its president. In September 1904, the first Adventist general meeting in Mexico was held. In 1905, a publishing house with printing facilities began operations. It was named La Verdad (“The Truth”). In 1906, a Sabbath school was organized in San Luis Potosí, where Salvador Marchisio continued his work after leaving Mexico City. Unfortunately, in 1907, Guadalajara Sanitarium closed.

Literature evangelism has been a pillar of church work since the beginning. In 1908, the Pacific Press donated a printing press machine to La Verdad. John Green was named the press’s first publishing director, and colporteurs began distributing the book, El Rey que viene (“The Coming King”). Unfortunately, but for the glory of God, Arturo A. Reinke became the first colporateúr to die on the line of duty in 1909.

In 1910, Pastor Caviness visited Ixtaltepec, Oaxaca. While there, the first Sabbath school was organized in Southern Mexico in 1911. Pastor Caviness also baptized the Jiménez brothers, Aurelio, Juan, and Catarino, who became known as the pioneers in spreading the Gospel message in that area. Also in 1911, Colegio de Tacubaya, the cradle of Adventist education in Mexico, opened. The Centro Educativo Ignacio Manuel Altamirano functions today as the successor of the Colegio.

The church in Central America continued to grow. In 1922, the General Conference organized the Inter-American Division. In 1926, the Mexican Union Mission was organized and comprised of Pacific Mission, North Mission, and Tehuantepec Mission. In October 1931, Colegio Adventista Mexicano opened. It was later renamed Escuela Industrial y de Salud.

In 1932, Sierra Madre Mission disappeared in a territorial reorganization that merged its territory into Gulf Mission. In 1937, Pastor Emiliano Ponce was voted mission president and, so, became the first Mexican administrator of a Mexican field. As a professional musician, he also arranged the hymn, “Far Beyond the Sun.” Also in 1937, the publishing agencies of the four missions merged, establishing the Mexican Publications Agency with headquarters in Monterrey, Nuevo León. In 1938, the Instituto Comercial Prosperidad was inaugurated in Mexico City. On October 14, 1939, the church in Tacubaya dedicated a new building.

The educational work needed a new campus in the north of the country. In 1942, Professor Rafael Muñoz was invited for this purpose. A committee formed by H. F. House, J. G. Pettey, and C. E. Moon searched for a location. Thanks to support from the General Conference, a farm named La Carlota in Montemorelos, Nuevo León, was purchased. The new educational institution was named Escuela Agrícola e Industrial Mexicana, and in November 1942, the institution now known as the University of Montemorelos opened its doors. It was voted to build a hospital on that same
Because of Pastor Caviness’s vision for the work in Southern Mexico, Chiapas Mission was organized with 25 churches, just over 1,422 members, Pastor Vicente Rodríguez as president, and Pastor Francisco Reyes as secretary-treasurer. Until May 1946, union committee minutes had been recorded in English; in May 1946, they were recorded in Spanish. The educational work continued to grow. On February 16, 1948, construction of Colegio del Pacífico began, and a nursing school in Montemorelos began operations. In 1948, the missions were renamed corporations. In 1949, Mexican Union Mission’s headquarters was transferred from Monterrey to Mexico City with offices in Colonia Narvarte, where Metropolitan Mexican Conference’s headquarters is now located. In 1952, Escuela Agrícola e Industrial Mexicana was renamed the Colegio Vocacional y Professional de Montemorelos. In 1957, the institution began to offer a two-year ministerial course. In 1958, the Adventist Seminary of Mexico was organized. In 1968, this became a four-year program leading to a licenciatura degree in theology. Also in 1968, Southeast Agricultural School (now Linda Vista University) moved from Teapa to Chiapas.

In 1969, Pastor Robert H. Pierson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, visited the church in Mexico. In 1971, the Mexican Union Mission purchased land in Sadi Carnot, where Mexico City Central Church is now located. The General Conference’s first annual council held outside of the United States was held in Mexico, and the Inter-American Division held its quadrennial council in Morelos.

In 1973, Universidad de Montemorelos was organized. Pastor B. L. Archbold led the committee meetings of 1974 that gave three Mexican fields (Central, South, and Southeast) conference status. The next year, two more conferences were created (South and Southeast), and West Mexican Mission was also voted into creation. This same year, classes began at the school of medicine of the University of Montemorelos.

In 1976, Pastor Velino Salazar asked the Inter-American Division to change the status of Mexican Union Mission to a conference. In 1977, the Mexican Union Mission’s new headquarters was inaugurated; Northeast Mexican Conference, North Mexican Conference, and Inter-Oceanic Conference were created; and Mexican Union Mission’s change in status from a mission to a conference was approved.

The work in Mexico continued to prosper. In 1980, 90 years after the message arrived in Mexico, Mexican Union Conference held its first quadrennial congress. In 1982, Isthmus Mexican Conference was organized, followed by Soconusco Mission in 1983. In 1985, Southeast Mexican Conference divided, creating Tabasco Mexican Mission. Mexican Union Conference was divided into North Mexican Union Conference and South Mexican Union Conference. In 1986, a new missionary journal, Enfoque de nuestro tiempo (“Focus of Our Time”), began its publication. The first book written by a Mexican author, Un Sito en la Cumbre by Dr. Félix Cortés, was also published.

The year 1988 saw territorial reorganization. Isthmus Mexican Conference disappeared with Veracruz Mexican Conference and Oaxaca Mexican Mission being created to take its place. Baja California Mexican Conference in the northeast and North Mexican Mission were also created. In 1989, South Pacific Mexican Conference and Hidalgo Veracruz Mexican Conference were created from the territory of Inter-Oceanic Mexican Conference. In 1991, “100 Years of Adventism in Mexico” was celebrated with special events throughout the territory.

### Formative Events: Organization of Central Mexican Union Mission

The work in Mexico continued to grow. In 1992, there were two unions, North Mexican Union Conference and South Mexican Union Conference, with their respective missions and conferences. The president of Central Mexican Conference, Sergio Balboa, held the position for the next four years. In 1994, Abner de los Santos became president, and the conference grew from 64 to 83 churches, demonstrating the commitment of the administration and the pastoral body.

In 2005, the Adventist Church had the challenge of reaching large cities. According to Patricia Gustin, former director of Instituto Adventista de Mision Mundial, the Seventh-day Adventist Church must reassess its priorities and allocate more resources to urban evangelism to fulfill its mission of preaching the gospel to the whole world since most of the world’s population lives in big cities. In response, the Inter-American Division decided to focus its efforts on the urban centers considered as the greatest challenges in its territory: Bogotá, Caracas, and Mexico City.

At that time, the two administrative units in Mexico City, Metropolitan Mexican Conference and Aztecta Mexican Mission, were part of North Mexican Union Conference with headquarters in Montemorelos, Nuevo León. The conference’s territory included 19 of the 32 states of Mexico. In 2008, Mexico City had over 21,000,000 inhabitants and was the fifth most populated city in the world. However, although the Adventist Church began its activities in this city over 100 years earlier, the church’s presence in Mexico City was low compared to other areas of Mexico.

The objective was to provide better attention to the members and reinforce the presence and growth of the church in the central area of Mexico, mainly in the capital. Therefore, at the request of the Inter-American Division on April 7, 2008, it was voted to reorganize North Mexican Union Conference and the Inter-Oceanic Mexican Union Mission into three unions. They were: North Mexican Union Conference comprising Baja California Conference, Gulf Mexican Conference, North Mexican Mission, Northeast Mexican Conference, Northwest Mexican Conference, Sinaloa Mission, and West Mexican Mission; Inter-Oceanic Mexican Union Mission comprising Hidalgo Veracruz Conference, Oaxaca Mission, Olmeca Conference, South Pacific Conference, and South Veracruz Conference; and Central...
Mexican Union Mission comprising Azteca Mexican Mission, Bajío Mexican Mission, Central Mexican Mission, and Metropolitan Mexican Conference, with their headquarters located in Mexico City, effective May 18, 2008.

On this occasion, Inter-American Division President Israel Leito said that it was felt that Mexico City should be separated from North Mexican Union Conference and that additional attention should be devoted to it. So, Central Mexican Union Mission was divided into four regions of church organization with the task to oversee the fields, “conquer” Mexico City, and fill it with the gospel.

Central Mexican Union Mission was created in May 2008 as a religious organization recognized by the Mexican secretariat of the interior and regulated by the Mexican undersecretary of migration, population, and religious affairs. As a religious organization, Central Mexican Union Mission could be defined as an administrative headquarters of the Adventist Church. Its purpose is to develop the global Adventist Church’s mission in accordance with its doctrinal principles and through the development of strategies directed by the global church, which are then adapted to the local context. Due to its short history, Central Mexican Union Mission receives financial support and directive guidance from the Inter-American Division.

At the time of its creation, Central Mexican Union Mission had three missions and one conference. Pastor Tomás Torres was its first president, and, in January 2016, Pastor José E. Dzul Trejo was appointed.

On June 14, 2010, the Seventh-day Adventist Church accepted Central Mexican Union Mission as part of the brotherhood of churches of the global church.

Conclusion

Central Mexican Union Mission's territory includes the states of Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Mexico, Mexico City, Michoacán, and Querétaro plus the northern portion of the state of Guerrero. It is comprised of Azteca Mexican Conference, Bajío Mexican Conference, Metropolitan Mexican Conference, Valley Mexican Mission, and Mexiquense Mission.

In harmony with the world church, the ideals of the union are:

Mission: To glorify God, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, lead each believer to an experience of personal and transformative relationship with Christ that enables him as a disciple to share the Eternal Gospel with every person.

Vision: Each member of the body of Christ prepared for God's kingdom.

Values: Integrity, unity, respect, giving glory to God, lifestyle, excellence and humility, compassion, fairness, and dedication.

For the strategic development of its territory, five ecclesiastical guidelines have been implemented: spiritual renewal; transformed leadership; witness and discipleship; total loyalty; and growth and consolidation.

The church faces environmental, educational, health, crime, secularism, and other challenges of large cities. At the organizational level, Central Mexican Union Mission works to consolidate the faith of its members, strengthen its finances, and develop the infrastructure of its churches, offices, and institutions.

In the area of communication, social networks show opportunities to reach a materialistic and secularized society.

**List of Administrators**


**SOURCES**


**NOTES**


6. Israel Leito, interview by author, Montemorelos, Nuevo León, July 8, 2019.


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