

# Arabic Union Mission (AUM)

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Shawna Vyhmeister holds a Ph.D. in education, and is a professor and research director at Middle East University where she works with her husband. Vyhmeister and her husband, Ronald Vyhmeister, have lived and worked in Africa, Asia, South America, and the United States. Their two adult sons and their wives live in the United States. Her hobbies include music, writing, travel, birding, diving, reading, cooking, learning languages, and playing games. Her greatest joy is working for the Lord, especially if it involves young people.

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The Arabic Union Mission (AUM) of Seventh-day Adventists had a brief 17-year history (1927-1944). It was organized in November 1927 as part of the European Division (from 1928, of the Central European Division)<sup>1</sup> The AUM headquarters were at Advent Villa, 8 Rue Balasan, Materialah, Cairo, Egypt. Its territory consisted of Egypt, Northern Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Arabia, Cyprus, Syria, Palestine, Transjordan, and Mesopotamia, with an estimated population of 30,000,000 throughout the region.<sup>2</sup>

The AUM was divided into the Egyptian Mission (Egypt, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Arabia, and Cyprus) and two other missions, the Syrian Mission (Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan), and Mesopotamian Mission (Iraq). The headquarters for all three missions was located at the same Cairo address. The only two AUM institutions, the Egyptian Depository and the Egypt Training School, were based at the same address.<sup>3</sup>

The superintendent of both the AUM and the Egyptian Mission was Pastor George Keough, one of the two ordained ministers serving at the AUM. The other was Pastor V. E. Toppenberg, superintendent of the Cairo Training school. A third ordained pastor, Nils Zerne, served as superintendent of the Syrian Mission.

Egypt has played a significant role in the development of Adventist church work throughout the Middle East and continues to do so to this day (2019). There are more Adventist members in Egypt than in any of the other countries in the region.<sup>4</sup>

Before the establishment of the AUM, the Egyptian-Syrian Union Mission (ESUM) was established in July 1923 with headquarters at the same address as the AUM. It consisted of Egyptian Mission (Egypt) and the Syrian Mission (Palestine, Cyprus, and Transjordan), with Nils Zerne as superintendent. As with the AUM, George Keough was superintendent of both the ESUM and the Egypt Mission.<sup>5</sup>

In 1944 the church restructured the administration of the region, and the AUM became the Middle East Union Mission (MEU), which was placed under the Central European Division Section Two, with headquarters based in Washington, D.C.<sup>6</sup>

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## NOTES

1. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996), s.v. "Egypt, Arab Republic of."
2. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1928), 154, 301, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB1928.pdf>.
3. Ibid.
4. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2019), 417-419.
5. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1927), 151, 282, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB1927.pdf>.
6. Manoug H. Nazirian, *The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lebanon, 1897-1997* (Beirut, Lebanon: East Mediterranean Field of Seventh-day Adventists), 19, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Books/TSDACIL1999.pdf>.

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