

Central Mindanao Mission

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Central Mindanao Mission (formerly part of North Central Mindanao Conference, then Central Mindanao Adventist Mission) is a relatively new church administrative unit under the South Philippine Union Conference in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists. It was organized and renamed in 2019.

The mission's territory includes; Cabanglasan, Damulog, Danggagan, Don Carlos, Impasugong, Kadingilan, Kalilangan, Kibawe, Kitaotao, Lantapan, Malaybalay, Maramag, Pangantucan, Quezon, San Fernando, Sumilao, and Valencia in the province of Bukidnon; and the municipality of Wao in Lanao del Sur. Statistics, as of June 30, 2020: churches 249, membership 50,800, population 2,457,330.

Origin of Adventist Work in Territory of the Conference

For several decades the Adventist work in the territory of the North-Central Mindanao Conference (NCMC) enjoyed steady and significant growth. Consequently, church leadership, as well the general membership of the local conference, saw an increasing need for workers. To respond to the need, more field workers were hired to pastor the growing numbers of churches and church members.¹

The conference is geographically classified into two areas, namely the Coastal area and the Bukidnon area. As more need arose, and due to the scope of the territory, it was decided to look into the possibility of dividing NCMC into two mission fields. The general membership had considered this idea since the 1990s, and church workers likewise saw its practicality. This idea was brought up during several constituency meetings, but it did not gain majority support.

Finally, the leadership of the local conference concluded that in order for the mission work to progress and the pastoral and administrative needs to be met, they must look in earnest at the idea of dividing NCMC into two missions. A survey was conducted with the thought of locating the new headquarters at Bukidnon, a province in the central part of Mindanao. This was a perfect location, considering the number of church members in the province, but a thorough study in terms of its financial capacity to fund the operation was needed. After the study brought positive results, plans were laid to bring the proposal to the constituency of the local conference.

In 2016 NCMC recommended to the South Philippine Union Conference (SPUC) that the mission territory be divided into two units. The leadership of SPUC was very supportive of the plan and acknowledged that it would be beneficial for the growth of the mission work and for better supervision of the territory of NCMC. In response to the request of NCMC, SPUC recommended to the Southern Asia-Pacific Division that the territory of NCMC be divided into two conferences/missions.² Plans were put into place for the transition into two missions. In May 2018 the mother mission authorized the purchase of property along the highway in Mailag, Bukidnon, where the new mission office would be located.³ After a thorough study by the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD), the request of SPUC to divide the territory of the Northern Mindanao Conference into two missions was approved in November 2018.⁴

On January 1, 2019, the new mission, though not yet officially organized, started its operation. The appointed president, Pastor Jerry Patalinghug, and the executive secretary, Pastor Porferio Lagunday, were temporarily located in the Home Economics building of Bagontaas Adventist Elementary School (BAES). Meanwhile, Edgardo Torniado, the appointed treasurer, was located at the Adventist Medical Center, Valencia (AMCV) and still functioning as president of the medical center—the office he held prior to his appointment to serve at the mission.⁵ When a new president was elected for AMCV the following month, he was able to fully function as mission treasurer.⁶

On January 3, 2019, CMM held its first workers meeting at the mess hall of AMCV. The appointed administrators passionately presented the initial plans for the new institution to the field workers and encouraged them to join hands to support the mission and vision of the newly created mission. Everyone was excited and eager to work for the new organization. The next event was the first constituency meeting of the new mission.

Organizational History of Mission

The Central Mindanao Mission office is temporarily located at the Mountain View College Annex computer laboratory building at Hagkol, Valencia, Bukidnon. It was formally organized as a mission during its first constituency meeting, held January 25-26, 2019, at the Bagon-taas Seventh-day Adventist Church, Valencia, Bukidnon.⁷ The first elected officers of the mission are president, Jerry C. Patalinhug; executive secretary, Porferio E. Lagunday, Jr.; and treasurer, Edgardo D. Torniado.⁸

In addition to the officers, five department directors were elected to serve the ministerial association; family, children's, and women's ministries; Adventist Laymen Services Incorporated; youth ministries; education; and publishing. After a few months the administrative committee created two more departments and elected a director to fill the post; they were stewardship and communication/integrated lifestyle evangelism.⁹

The first constituency meeting was attended by all the officers of the South Philippine Union Conference and all the presidents of the local missions and conferences, except for the president of Northeastern Mindanao Mission.

The proposed name of the mission, as submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the government regulatory agency that supervises the corporate sector of the country, was Central Mindanao Adventist Mission (CMAM). However, it was denied because there was already an existing registered name with the acronym CMAM. In addition, the word *Adventist* in CMAM was redundant, it was the mission “of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

The name was brought back for discussion by the SPUC Administrative Committee and, after thorough deliberation, the name that was approved was Central Mindanao Mission (CMM). The name “Central Mindanao Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (CMM)” was then submitted to the SEC for approval. After a month, approval by that agency was issued to SPUC for the official use of the proposed name.

At the time CMM was organized, it had 17 ordained ministers, nine un-ordained pastors, 14 pre-interns, 35 regular teachers, nine probationary teachers, 45 contractual teachers 15 elementary schools, two academies, and 110 literature evangelists.¹⁰ It had 249 organized churches and 123 companies, with a total membership of 52,402.¹¹ The territory of CMM is comprised of 26 districts, and each district contains a number of churches which are cared for by a district leader.¹²

In February 2019 the CMM Administrative Committee authorized its treasurer and director of legal and trust services, Edgardo Tornado, to process the pertinent papers for the property in Mailag, Bukidnon, so that construction of the headquarters building for the new mission could begin.¹³ While funds are being raised for the new building, the mission office continues to reside at the MVC Annex building, particularly in the computer building, for a minimal rent of P 20,000) per month.

The dream of having a new mission in the heart of Bukidnon province is now realized. Now the focus has shifted to leading out in the soul-winning efforts and nurture programs of the Church. It is also a priority for the mission workers to visit the local churches for revival meetings and mission involvement.

The mission is looking at several barangays and villages that are unreached in its territory. The goal of the mission is to inspire all members of CMM to get involved as Christ’s true disciples to witness and proclaim to all people in its territory, especially to the unreached communities in the hinterlands, the everlasting gospel of the Three Angels’ Messages in preparation for Christ’s soon return.¹⁴

Training and empowerment programs started towards the end of 2019. Care Groups and committed Gospel Outreach were on the move, although by 2020 some of these evangelism initiatives were temporarily halted due to the global pandemic. However, the plans are still there and, if the restrictions due to the pandemic are lifted, these programs will continue. In spite of the ongoing pandemic, there are still many things that are being done to implement the I WILL GO initiative of the world Church.¹⁵

Another focus of the mission in the territory is to build a healthy relationship with the Muslim community. The leadership of CMM wants Adventists and Muslims to peacefully co-exist as brothers and sisters. It is the plan of

the mission to assign someone to connect the church with the Muslims through “Adventist-Muslim Relations” (AMR).¹⁶

Mission Challenges

One of the challenges of the mission is to bring back into the church the supporters of the defunct group called the “Loud Cry Ministry” (LCM). The LCM followers are pretending to be active in the church; but, in reality, their allegiance, loyalty, and support are to the ministry of LCM. They are very critical of the leadership of the church in the mission territory.¹⁷

Another challenge that the mission faces is the cultic group in one of the churches which calls itself the “Prayer Warriors.” The group leader, a woman, claims that she is the *Father*, one of the members claims to be the *Son* and, later, another claimed to be the *Holy Spirit*. The group has shaken the church, because even the former church pastor and some local church leaders advocate the beliefs of this group.¹⁸

The greatest challenge the new mission is facing is the spirituality of the church members. The leadership has found that some members can easily be persuaded to follow any groups which can provide them with financial assistance. The leadership of the mission is working to foster the loyalty of the members to the church and to the gospel.¹⁹

To address these challenges the mission has adopted the following goals.

To increase the number of church members from 38,906 to 50,000 by 2025. The slogan for CMM is “Target 50.”

To establish a church in every barangay (small administrative district) in the territory. This is in harmony with the program “Adopt a Church.” This program is aimed at unchurched people in the territory.

To minimize the number of churches each district pastor is responsible for, so each one has a minimum of six and a maximum of ten churches. This is to strengthen the nurturing and discipling program of the pastors in CMM.

To increase the number of CMM Care Groups to 10,000 by 2025.

To ensure that each Adventist church along the highway is clearly identified as an Adventist church.

To construct one MEGA church in the Bukidnon territory which will be a center of influence for all church goers.

To construct the mission headquarters at the acquired property in Colonia, beginning in the last quarter of 2020 and concluding in 2023 before the quinquennium ends.

To develop at least one Center of Influence in every municipality by the year 2025.²⁰

Vision Statement

“In harmony with the Bible, Central Mindanao Mission sees the climax of God’s restoration of man’s original state in the kingdom of heaven, and all of God’s creation will live in full harmony with His perfect will and righteousness. In that place prepared by God for His family, there will be no races or colors or ethnicity, but we shall be living together as one big family and enjoy life at its best.”²¹

List of Presidents

Jerry C. Patalinhug (2019-present)

SOURCES

Action No. 2016-134, Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of South Philippine Union Conference, Masterson Avenue, Upper Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City, September 26, 2016. SPUC Archives, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines.

Action No. 2018-079 Southern-Asia Pacific Division, San Miguel II, Bypass, Silang, Cavite, Year- End Executive Committee Meeting, November 5-7, 2018. SSD Archives. Silang, Cavite, Philippines.

Action No. 2018-135, Executive Committee Meeting, North Central Mindanao Conference, Cagayan de Oro, City. May 20, 2018. Central Mindanao Adventist Mission archives, Valencia City, Bukidnon, Philippines.

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CMM ADCOM Minutes, February 7, 2019, Action No. 2019-27. Central Mindanao Adventist Mission archives, Valencia City, Bukidnon, Philippines.

Statistical Report of the North-Central Mindanao Conference, CMM Archives, Valencia City, Bukidnon, Philippines.

NOTES

1. See Statistical Report of the North-Central Mindanao Conference, CMM Archives.

2. See Action No. 2016-134, Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of South Philippine Union Conference, Masterson Avenue, Upper Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City, September 26, 2016. SPUC Archives.
3. Action No. 2018-135, Executive Committee Meeting, North Central Mindanao Conference, Cagayan de Oro, City. May 20, 2018.
4. Action No. 2018-079 Southern-Asia Pacific Division, San Miguel II, Bypass, Silang, Cavite, Year-End Executive Committee Meeting, November 5-7, 2018, SSD Archives.
5. Jerry Patalinhug, president of CMM, email message to the author, August 7, 2020.
6. Ibid.
7. See CMAM 1st Constituency Meeting Souvenir Program.
8. Ibid.
9. Jerry Patalinhug, president of CMM, email message to the author, August 7, 2020.
10. Ibid.
11. Statistical Report of North-Central Mindanao Mission, CMAM archives.
12. Ibid.
13. CMAM ADCOM Minutes, February 7, 2019, Action No. 2019-27.
14. Jerry Patalinhug, president of CMM, email message to the author, August 7, 2021.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Jerry Patalinhug, president of CMM, email message to the author, August 7, 2021.

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