



North New Zealand Conference office, Pakuranga Heights, Auckland, New Zealand.

Photo courtesy of Ben Timothy.

North New Zealand Conference, South Pacific Division

BARRY OLIVER

Barry Oliver, Ph.D., retired in 2015 as president of the South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Sydney, Australia. An Australian by birth Oliver has served the Church as a pastor, evangelist, college teacher, and administrator. In retirement, he is a conjoint associate professor at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored over 106 significant publications and 192 magazine articles. He is married to Julie with three adult sons and three grandchildren.

The North New Zealand Conference, with headquarters in Auckland, New Zealand, administers the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church within the North Island of New Zealand.

Current Territory and Statistics

The North New Zealand Conference is a constituent of the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference.¹ Its headquarters are located at 47 Ben Lomond Crescent, Pakuranga Heights 2010, Auckland, New Zealand. Its postal address is Private Bag 76900, S. A. M. C. Auckland, New Zealand.²

The unincorporated activities of the conference are governed by a constitution which is based on the model conference constitution of the South Pacific Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (SPD). Its real property is held in trust by the Seventh-day Adventist Church Property Trustee (NZ) Ltd, an incorporated entity based at the headquarters office of the New Zealand Pacific Union in Howick, Auckland, New Zealand, and placed on the New Zealand Companies Register on April 28, 2004.³ Its intellectual property is held in trust by Australasian Conference Association Limited, an incorporated entity based at the headquarters office of the SPD in Wahroonga, New South Wales. New Zealand Seventh-day Adventist Schools Association Limited is an incorporated entity established in 1992 to hold the title for school properties of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in New Zealand. It is the entity that the government of New Zealand recognizes for the payment of grants to Adventist schools in New Zealand.⁴

The North New Zealand Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is registered under this name on the New Zealand Charities Services Register. Its registration number is CC42024 and it was registered on June 30, 2008.⁵

The official territory of the North New Zealand Conference is the North Island of New Zealand.⁶

In the *2018 Annual Statistical Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*, the North New Zealand Conference was listed as having 61 churches and 26 companies. Church membership at the end of 2017 was 10,858.⁷ The conference had 107 active employees. Its tithe receipts for 2016 totaled US\$6,805,241. Its tithe and offerings per capita were US\$1,670.86.⁸

The North New Zealand Conference publishes three regular periodicals.

Plugin is a subscribed weekly email for churches and members in the North New Zealand Conference, which contains spiritual thoughts, event information, sunset times, offering information, news and notices from the conferences and local churches.⁹

Pulse is a monthly newsletter for the youth and young adults in the North New Zealand Conference.¹⁰

The *Annual Planning Calendar*, containing significant events organized and promoted by the conference, is produced and made available to churches and members.¹¹

Institutions of the North New Zealand Conference

The North New Zealand Conference supports thirteen schools,¹² a retirement center, a recreational camp, and a bookstore.

Auckland Seventh-day Adventist High School, located at 119 Mountain Road, Mangere Bridge, Auckland, New Zealand, has an enrollment of 219 in grades 9-13 with a teaching staff of twenty.

Balmoral Seventh-day Adventist School, located at 10 Wiremu Street, Balmoral, Auckland, New Zealand, has an enrollment of 94 in grades 1-8 with a teaching staff of five.

Hamilton Seventh-day Adventist School, located at 46 Annebrooke Road, RD 3, Hamilton, New Zealand, has an enrollment of 60 in grades 1-8 with a teaching staff of four.

New Plymouth Adventist Christian School, located at 41 Saxton Road, RD 1, New Plymouth, New Zealand, has an enrollment of 18 in grades 1-8 with a teaching staff of one.

Palmerston North Adventist Christian School, located at 25 Snelson Street, Palmerston North, New Zealand, the school has an enrolment of 83 in grades 1-8 with a teaching staff of six.

Parkside Christian Adventist School, located at 135 Tait Drive, Greenmeadows, Napier, New Zealand, has an enrollment of 44 in grades 1-8 with a teaching staff of three.

Rotorua Seventh-day Adventist School, located at 3 Tilsley Street, Glenholme, Rotorua, New Zealand, has an enrollment of 42 in grades 1-8 with a teaching staff of three.

South Auckland Seventh-day Adventist School, located at 42A Puhinui Road, Papatoetoe, Auckland, New Zealand, the school has an enrollment of 321 in grades 1-8 with a teaching staff of seventeen.

Tauranga Adventist School, located at 19 Moffat Road, Bethlehem, Tauranga, New Zealand, the school has an enrollment of 102 in grades 1-8 with a teaching staff of six.

Waitakere Seventh-day Adventist School, located at 26 Corban Avenue, Henderson, Auckland, New Zealand, has an enrollment of 32 in grades 1-8 with a teaching staff of three.

Wellington Seventh-day Adventist School, located at 58 Raiha Street, Porirua, Wellington, New Zealand, has an enrollment of 58 in grades 1-8 with a teaching staff of 4.

Whakatane Seventh-day Adventist School, located at 57A James Street, Whakatane, New Zealand, has an enrollment of 29 in grades 1-8 with a teaching staff of three.

Whangarei Adventist Christian School, located at 82 Whau Valley Road, Whau Valley, Whangarei, New Zealand, has an enrollment of 20 in grades 1-8 with a teaching staff of one.

Nursing home and retirement facilities, called Bethesda, were opened on January 15, 1984.¹³ Located at 743 Great South Road, Wiri, Auckland, New Zealand, they offer independent living units, a rest home, and hospital care.¹⁴

Tui Ridge Park is a camp ground and events center located at 260 Anderson Road, Rotorua, New Zealand.¹⁵

Located in the conference office complex, the Adventist Book Centre supplies print and visual resources for the church and community in North New Zealand.¹⁶

Significant Events in the Organization of the North New Zealand Conference

In early 1889, there were over 150 baptized members in New Zealand and three organized churches—Kaeo, Auckland, and Napier. On May 27, 1889, on the recommendation of Stephen Haskell who had written from America, a New Zealand Conference was organized with Arthur Daniells elected president; W. H. Hardy, secretary, and George Masters, treasurer. A conference committee of four was appointed: Joseph Hare, Jr., S. Rout, John Glass, and Thomas Ward. None of the conference officers were on the committee.¹⁷ On the same day the conference was organized, the New Zealand Tract Society was also organized.¹⁸ The role of the Tract Society was to care for the publication and distribution of books and literature throughout New Zealand. The chosen officers were Arthur Daniells, president, Robert Hare, vice president, and M. H. Tuxford, secretary and treasurer.¹⁹

Five years later, the New Zealand Conference was included in the Australasian Union Conference (AUC) which was organized during the Australian camp meeting held January 15-25, 1894. The AUC comprised District No. 7 of the General Conference Districts, and included the conferences of Australia and New Zealand. It was, in fact, the first union conference organized in the global Seventh-day Adventist Church. The stated objective of the union was “to unify and extend the work of the third angel's message, under the general direction of the General Conference, in the Australasian field.”²⁰

A major organizational change occurred within New Zealand in 1915. At the 25th annual session of the conference held at Napier, January 19-31, 1915, a recommendation to form a separate conference for the South Island was proposed and adopted as follows: “*We Recommend*, That the territory south of the Cook Straits be detached from this conference, and be organized into a separate conference.”²¹ The elected officers of the New Zealand Conference (now just the North Island) were J. M. Cole, president ; H. E. Piper, vice president; and E. Rosendahl, secretary/treasurer.²² Shortly thereafter, the southern conference was designated the South New Zealand Conference and the northern conference the North New Zealand Conference.

The two New Zealand Conferences continued as constituent conferences of the AUC until 1949. Up until that time, the Australasian Union Conference, also designated the Australasian Division, operated as a collection of

conferences and missions throughout its designated territory.²³ In 1949, four unions were organized within the territory of the division which also was now designated the Australasian Inter-Union Conference:²⁴ "1. Central Pacific Union Mission with headquarters in Suva, Fiji; 2. Coral Sea Union Mission with headquarters in Lae, Papua New Guinea; 3. Trans-Commonwealth Union Conference with headquarters in Melbourne, Victoria; and 4. Trans-Tasman Union Conference with headquarters in Gordon, New South Wales."²⁵ South New Zealand Conference and North New Zealand Conference were part of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference.²⁶

In 2000, a further major reorganization of the unions in the South Pacific Division occurred at the division session.²⁷ The number of unions in the division was reduced from five to four. The New Zealand Pacific Union Conference (NZPUC) came into existence in this reorganization.²⁸ The action of the South Pacific Division session on October 31, 2000, read that there would be a New Zealand Pacific Union Conference made up of the North New Zealand Conference, South New Zealand Conference, French Polynesia Mission, New Caledonia Mission, Cook Islands Mission, and Pitcairn Island Church. The new organizational structure became effective on January 1, 2001.²⁹

Following the reorganization, the headquarters of the NZPUC were first established in the conference office of the North New Zealand Conference.³⁰ Since that time there have been no further organizational changes affecting the North New Zealand Conference.

The Headquarters Office of the North New Zealand Conference

Soon after the New Zealand Conference was organized it was recognized that there was a need for a central administrative office. Thus, in May 1890 the headquarters of the conference were established in Buckle Street, Wellington, where a lease on the building was obtained for one year.³¹ Subsequently, the office was moved to Banks Terrace, Wellington, and then to 57 Tory Street, Wellington. In March 1898, a building to house the conference office and the office of the New Zealand Tract Society was erected at 37 Taranaki Street, Wellington.³² The building, known as Beulah Hall, was sold in 1908.³³ New premises were secured and an office occupied at Queen Street, Lower Hutt, on Monday, July 20, 1908.³⁴ That office was occupied for three years and the conference moved to Royston House, 70 Nairn Street, Wellington, in 1912.³⁵ The next move was to Auckland. Rented premises were obtained for a short time at 108 Ponsonby Road, Auckland.³⁶ Purpose-built premises were occupied at 84 Jervois Road, Auckland in 1919.³⁷

The conference occupied the Jervois Road premises until 1944 when the headquarters were moved to 27 Esplanade Road, Mt Eden, Auckland.³⁸ In early 1964, a new office was constructed at 591 Dominion Road, Balmoral, Auckland.³⁹ On January 15, 1984, the office relocated to 743 Great South Rd, Wiri, Auckland.⁴⁰ The most recent relocation occurred on November 28, 2016, when the conference office began sharing a site with the East Auckland Seventh-day Adventist Church at 47 Ben Lomond Crescent, Pakuranga Heights 2010,

Auckland, New Zealand. The current location at the time of writing is an interim arrangement until a more permanent office is chosen.⁴¹

Mission and Strategic Plans of the North New Zealand Conference⁴²

The vision of the North New Zealand Conference is: “Making Disciples, Multiplying Ministries and Transforming Communities.”

The Ministry Plan is to empower local church leaders by:

Praying in faith and being Spirit led

Opening missional relationships in local neighborhoods

Wise and strategic stewardship of all conference resources

Engaging youth in the life and ministry of the church

Renewing sacrificial service in paid and volunteer ministry

The North New Zealand Conference is fulfilling its mission of making disciples, multiplying ministries, and transforming communities through a heightened emphasis on discipleship and disciple-making efforts in local churches, and multiplying the number of ministries involved in community engagement. Various examples of ministries aiming to bring about community transformation are church soup kitchens, homeless shelters, a free barber service, fitness classes (e.g. Zumba), SOLID mentoring program (kickboxing), community gardens, the Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP), community health checks, CREATION Health programs, Women’s Refuge, Road to Bethlehem (re-enactment of events surrounding Christ’s birth), community fun days, iCAN58 (community service event), children’s outreach (e.g. food parcels and meals), community dinners for the elderly, Pacifica Health Days, family and parenting workshops and debt relief programs (e.g. Christians Against Poverty programs). Some of these programs and other initiatives are achieved through a Community Transformation Program funding partnership with ADRA NZ.⁴³

Local church leaders are empowered by the conference’s system of pastoral clusters, where ministers in each region meet on a monthly basis with each other and their regional pastor for encouragement, support, and professional development. This system has resulted in joint efforts in areas such as training and outreach. Church planting initiatives have resulted in the number of known congregations growing from 85 to 122 in recent years.⁴⁴

Remaining Challenges

Some remaining challenges for the North New Zealand Conference include how to assist and fully integrate church plants and new groups that have been formed due to church splits while ensuring on-going collective motivation and compliance for strong, unified witness. There is also a continuing need to constantly enhance

communication with local churches, aligning local initiatives with conference-wide vision and mission during leadership and personnel changes. Other missional challenges facing the conference are the need for a more coordinated and strategic ministry plan for reaching the Maori population across New Zealand's north island and overcoming asymmetrical growth patterns, whereby the lowest church membership growth is experienced among the largest and most dominant, cultural demographics, namely Maori and Pakeha (European New Zealanders). This latter issue is particularly acute in the major, urban centers.⁴⁵

New Zealand Conference Presidents

A. G. Daniells (1889-1891); M. C. Israel (1891-1893); unknown (1894-1896); E. W. Farnsworth (1897-1900); W. L. H. Baker (1901-1905); S. M. Cobb (1906-1908); J. Pallant (1908-1911); J. M. Cole (1912-1915).

North New Zealand Conference Presidents

J. M. Cole (1915-1916); W. H. Pascoe (1916-1918); A. W. Cormack (1918-1923); H. M. Blunden (1923-1924); W. M. R. Scragg (1925-1929); W. G. Turner (1930); H. E. Piper (1930-1936); R. E. Hare (1936-1937); H. G. Moulds (1938-1945); W. E. Battye (1945-1948); R. J. Burns (1949-1955); R. A. Grieve (1956); C. F. Hollingsworth (1957-1961); F. L. Stokes (1962-1969); K. S. Parmenter (1969-1970); V. Wood-Stotesbury (1971-1977); R. J. King (1978-1981); D. B. Hills (1982-1985); L. A. Smith (1986-1992); R. W. Townend (1992-2000); Jerry Matthews (2000-2005); Edward Tupai (2005-2018); Ben Timothy (2018-)

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Townend, C. A. "Dual Opening in New Zealand." *Australasian Record*, March 17, 1984.

"Tui Ridge Park." Accessed March 1, 2019. <https://www.tuiridgepark.co.nz/>.

NOTES

1. Recognition is given to Hugh Heenan, secretary of the North New Zealand Conference at the time of writing, who assisted in compiling some of the information in this article.

2. The conference website, shared with the South New Zealand Conference, is <https://adventist.org.nz>.
3. Graeme Drinkall, secretary Treasurer of the NZPUC, email to author February 20, 2019.
4. Ibid.
5. "Charities Services: Supporting Charities in New Zealand," New Zealand Government, Internal Affairs, accessed March 17, 2019, <https://register.charities.govt.nz/CharitiesRegister/ViewCharity?accountId=bf93b66-911c-dd11-99cd-0015c5f3da29>.
6. "North New Zealand Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2016), 353.
7. *2018 Annual Statistical Report 154th Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for 2016 and 2017*, accessed March 1, 2019, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/ASR/ASR2018.pdf>
8. Ibid. A current statistical overview of the conference at any time may be accessed at <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fStatistics%2fASR&FolderCTID=0x01200095DE8DF0FA49904B9D65211>
9. It is accessible at <https://adventist.org.nz/connect/plugin/>.
10. It is accessible at <https://adventist.org.nz/connect/pulse/>.
11. "North Island: 2019-2010 Calendars," Adventist Church in New Zealand, accessed March 1, 2019, <https://adventist.org.nz/resources/nnzc-calendar/>.
12. Enrollment and staff statistics were obtained from "South Pacific Division, Annual Report to the General Conference, NZPUC, 2017," Office of the Education Director of the South Pacific Division, Wairoa, New South Wales, Australia.
13. C. A. Townend, "Dual Opening in New Zealand," *Australasian Record*, March 17, 1984, 1.
14. "Bethesda," accessed March 17, 2019, <http://bethesda.org.nz/>.
15. "Tui Ridge Park," accessed March 1, 2019, <https://www.tuiridgepark.co.nz/>.
16. "Adventist Book Centre," accessed March 1, 2019, <https://www.adventistbooks.org.nz/>.
17. "New Zealand Conference Proceedings," *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, August 1, 1889, 236.
18. For further information see "New Zealand Tract Society."

19. "Organization of the New Zealand Tract Society," *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, August 1, 1889, 236.
20. "Australasian Union Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1894), 40.
21. "The New Zealand Conference," *Australasian Record*, March 1, 1915, 3.
22. Ibid.
23. H. E. Piper, "Special Session, Australasian Union Conference," *Australasian Record*, September 13, 1948, 2-3.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. K. S. Parmenter, "Australasian Division Mission Field Development," *Australasian Record*, May 14, 1973, 1.
27. Bruce Manners, "Session Votes for Restructure," *Record* [South Pacific Division], November 25, 2000, 8-9.
28. For further information see "New Zealand Pacific Union Conference, South Pacific Division."
29. South Pacific Division Quinquennial Session Minutes, Action 2.5, "Realignment of Union Boundaries," October 31, 2000, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives.
30. New Zealand Pacific Union Conference Session Minutes, action 1.11, November 11, 2000, New Zealand Pacific Union Conference Archives, Howick, Auckland, New Zealand.
31. A. G. Daniells, "New Zealand," *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, May 1, 1890, 140.
32. "New Zealand Tract Society Building," *Union Conference Record*, March 7, 1898, 191.
33. O. A. Olsen, "New Zealand," *Union Conference Record*, February 24, 1908, 8.
34. "Notes," *Union Conference Record*, August 3, 1908, 7.
35. "Notice," *Australasian Record*, September 9, 1912, 8.
36. "Important Removal Notice," *Australasian Record*, June 12, 1916, 8.
37. "Change of address," *Australasian Record*, August 18, 1919, 8.
38. "Brevities," *Australasian Record*, March 20, 1944, 8.

39. B. C. Grosser, "Designed for the Space Age," *Australasian Record*, May 4, 1964, 2.

40. C. A. Townend, "Dual Opening in New Zealand," *Australasian Record*, March 17, 1984, 1.

41. Hugh Heenan, secretary of the North New Zealand Conference, email to author, June 4, 2019.

42. Information supplied to the author by Hugh Heenan, Secretary of the North New Zealand Conference, email, February 21, 2019.

43. Hugh Heenan, secretary of the North New Zealand Conference, email to author, May 30, 2019.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

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