

# Jiménez Toledo, Aurelio (1885–1973)

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## CÉSAR GÓMEZ

César Gómez Jiménez began his theological studies at the Universidad de Montemorelos, then continued at the Universidad Adventista del Plata, and finished at the Universidad Adventista de Chile. He studied masters and doctoral degrees in ministry at the Andrews University extension at the Universidad de Montemorelos. He was a district pastor, personal ministries department director, mission president, union secretary, and union president. He is married to Erna Haydée Alvarado Poblete and has two daughters.

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Aurelio Jiménez Toledo was a lay member who, by his efforts and dedication, took the Adventist message to many parts of southern Mexico and became an ordained pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.



Aurelio Jiménez Toledo

Photo courtesy of Ellen G. White Research Center archives at Montemorelos University.

## Early Life

Aurelio Jiménez was born November 12, 1885, in Ixtaltepec, Isthmus of Tehuantepec, state of Oaxaca, Mexico<sup>1</sup> His parents were Domingo Jiménez and Antonia Mejía. He had five brothers and two sisters, and his childhood was spent in Ixtaltepec. The first contact that he had with the Seventh-day Adventist Church was in 1905, when he was 20 years old. It came to him through reading the magazine *"El Mensajero de la Verdad (The Messenger of Truth)"* that Aurelio and his brother Juan had received as the wrapping for merchandise they had bought in Juchitán, a nearby town. Because of the interest that those torn pages of the magazine awoke in them, they spent two years looking for information about the origin of that magazine, wanting to know who published it, but they were not able to learn of its origin.<sup>2</sup>

While they searched, their father, who had acquired the habit of drinking alcoholic beverages, became very ill. As Aurelio looked for a way to heal his father, he discovered in the regional newspaper an advertisement for a

clinic that promised to cure alcoholism. Aurelio and his brother ordered the medicine from Mexico City. When the medicine arrived, it was wrapped in two almost complete issues of the magazine, *The Messenger of Truth*. They were the March and April issues of 1907.<sup>3</sup>

From the beginning of its work in Mexico, the Adventist Church had published *The Messenger of Truth* in Spanish in Mexico City. The editor was Pastor George Washington Caviness, and his associates were Pastor George M. Brown, A. N. Colunga, and Marcial Serna. Aurelio and his brother Juan realized that the magazines that were wrapped around the medicine from Mexico City were connected to the magazine fragments that they had read almost three years before. The content of the issues from March and April convinced Aurelio and his brother that it was important to accept and obey the message it contained.<sup>4</sup>

In the March issue was an article about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, written by A. G. Daniels. There was also an article by Ellen G. White about health and temperance, with an emphasis on the relationship between diet and health. The April issue talked about the Sabbath day of rest that God had established, and how Jesus and His apostles both taught and practiced it. Aurelio and Juan ordered a subscription to the magazine and later asked for a Bible. In the meantime, they began to tell their family and friends with joy of the good news they had discovered.<sup>5</sup>

A few months later a group of people began to gather each Sabbath at Aurelio's house to study the Bible and keep the day of rest. The group agreed to ask the editors of *The Messenger of Truth* to send a representative to visit them. Several weeks later, in response to that request, Dr. W. S. Swayze came as a representative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.<sup>6</sup> When he arrived in southern Mexico, he discovered, to his surprise, that several groups were getting together every Sabbath to study the Word of God. When he returned to Mexico City, Dr. Swayze invited Aurelio to attend the yearly meeting of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mexico. When the leaders heard the testimony of Aurelio, they were surprised and praised God because the Word had arrived in that region of the country and was rapidly spreading. In 1911 Aurelio was baptized and joined the Adventist Church.<sup>7</sup> The first Adventist church in southern Mexico was organized in 1912, and Aurelio Jiménez was ordained as the elder of the church in Ixtaltepec.<sup>8</sup>

## Marriage

On December 24, 1915, Aurelio married María T. Mejía in the city of Tonalá, state of Chiapas, Mexico. They had six children, all members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, whose names from eldest to youngest were Loyda, Erasto, Eunice, Noemí, Esther, and Elisa.<sup>9</sup>

## Ministry

Aurelio was ordained as an Adventist pastor, the first in southern Mexico.<sup>10</sup> His ministry was successful, even more so because of the interest Aurelio had in the topic of health that *The Messenger of Truth* had awakened in him. Almost every issue had articles about diet and health. Later, as a self-taught man, he acquired the books *Practical Guide to Health* and *The Home and Health*. He read them carefully, putting into practice the principles that he learned from them. In his visits and contacts with people, he taught and preached about healing and helped to cure some illnesses. His trips would last from three to four months, because he covered an extensive territory, and during the rainy season some of the rivers of Chiapas rose to the point where he could not cross to the other side again until the waters fell back to their normal level. Aurelio had his headquarters in Ixtaltepec, but from there he traveled to towns and cities such as Tonalá, Copainalá, Tapachula, Tecpatán, Pijijiapan, Simojovel, and Tapilula in the state of Chiapas, and Salina Cruz, Tehuantepec, Juchitán, Espinal, Ixtepec and other towns in the state of Oaxaca, leaving in each place established groups and families interested in the study of God's Word.<sup>11</sup>

## Later Life and Legacy

After 25 years of service, Aurelio retired and returned to his birthplace where he continued helping the church until the day of his death on August 13, 1973. He was 88 years old. His life, his example, and his ministry were direct instruments for the preaching of the gospel in the states of Chiapas and Oaxaca. He established many churches and congregations in Chiapas, which home to the Chiapas Mexican Union Conference, and in Oaxaca, now home to two conferences. He is considered the founder of the Adventist Church in the South of Mexico.

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### NOTES

1. Noemí Jiménez Mejía, telephone interview by the author, César Gómez Jiménez, in Montemorelos, N. L., on March 2, 2018.
2. Félix Cortés A. and Velino Salazar E., *Esforzados y valientes (Hard-working and Courageous)*, Montemorelos, N. L. México: Editorial Perspectiva y Análisis, 2015, 64-66.
3. Ibid., 63, 64.
4. Velino Salazar E., *Cien años de Adventismo en México (One Hundred Years of Adventism in Mexico)*, Montemorelos, N. L. México: Centro de Producción Unión Mexicana del Norte, 1997, 58.
5. Cortés A. and Salazar E., 64.
6. Ibid., 65.
7. Ibid., 66.
8. Salazar E., 66.
9. Cesar Gómez Jiménez, personal experience from being Aurelio Jimenez's nephew.
10. Salazar E., 91.
11. Ibid., 61.

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