

Ignacio Manuel Altamirano Educational Center

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Ignacio Manuel Altamirano Educational Center (Centro Educativo Ignacio Manuel Altamirano) is located on Calle Prosperidad 91, Colonia Escandón, Miguel Hidalgo, Mexico City, Mexico. It is managed under the [Azteca Mexican Conference](#) of the [Central Mexican Union Mission](#) in the territory of the [Inter-American Division](#).

Beginnings of Adventist Education in Mexico City

In 1930, Pastor Harold F. House was elected “to serve as Educational Secretary of the Mexican Union and principal of the Mexican training school.”¹ One of his main objectives as a visionary and hardworking leader was to lead the institution in the training of ministers, teachers, and other professionals who would be needed to fulfill the mission of the Adventist Church in Mexico.

Pastor House was determined to continue to support and supervise the operations of the Mexican Adventist training school which, at that time, was under the direction of Joseph W. Phillips, known in Mexico as José Felipe Caminos. Pastor House wanted the institution to offer courses to prepare pastors and national Adventist Church leaders.²

In the late 1930s, the school offered courses to the youth who intended to serve as ministers and teachers in the Adventist Church. Alfred G. Parfitt and Rafael Muñoz taught secondary level courses with an emphasis on theology for those wishing to become pastors; they also offered secretarial and accounting courses for those wanting to serve in those professions. The institution’s activities were held in a small wooden building that housed classrooms and dormitories.

As president of the Mexican Union Mission, Harold F. House’s spiritual leadership and vision led him and his administration to pursue the development of Christian education in Mexico. Realizing that the Instituto Comercial Prosperidad (which became its last known name over the years) had no more potential for growth in Mexico City, they decided it was time to relocate. Their search for a more suitable location between January and

March of 1942 resulted in the acquisition of land on the La Carlota estate near the city of Montemorelos, Nuevo León. In November 1942, the newly established school in La Carlota was named Escuela Agrícola Industrial Mexicana. These were the humble beginnings of the modern-day Montemorelos University.³

The relocation of students and the teaching staff of the Instituto Comercial Prosperidad in Mexico City to Montemorelos in 1943 resulted in a void for Adventist education in Mexico City.

Reestablishment of Adventist Education in Mexico City

The Adventist Church in Mexico City was determined to reestablish its Adventist educational system. A small and humble school was started. Church members referred to the school as “the little school of the Tacubaya Church” because of the close relationship between the Tacubaya Church and the school. The school was located close to the original location as the previous school.

In 1944, the Central Mexican Mission board of directors asked Victoria Funes, who worked in the Publications Department, to serve as the school’s teacher and director. Director Funes was assisted by teachers Ernestina Bairez, Carmen Vargas, Raquel Torres, María Oliver Ríos, and Alicia Oliver Ríos.⁴

During Funes’s administration, the school was incorporated as a primary school for the federal district. At that time, the school utilized old barracks as classrooms. Later, with the generous support of Colonel Velarde, a supporter of the Adventist Church, the school’s capacity was expanded. Under his command, a group of soldiers built two more rooms that served as new classrooms. In 1948, the primary school enrollment consisted mostly of the few children from the Tacubaya Church, the pastors, and the mission staff.⁵

In 1963, the school’s principal was Francisco Borrás, and the teaching staff consisted of Rosario Cienfuegos, Manuel Guzmán, Elsa Illingworth, and Ofelia Jiménez. During the tenure of this group of teachers, the secondary school was launched, utilizing the innovative telesecundaria method. This “televised” method emerged in Mexico to support the secondary school community. Its mission was to achieve a better quality of life for students through an academic model characterized by the use of free textbooks and complementary printed, audiovisual, and computer materials.⁶

Establishment

A. J. Calderón, who at the time of retirement in 1965 was the secretary/treasurer of the Inter-Oceanic Mission, proposed the name of Centro Educativo Ignacio Manuel Altamirano. He had proposed this name because he believed that the life of Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, a humble indigenous man who became a highly known and well-regarded historic figure in Mexico, represented the struggles that the school had to face in its early years.⁷ Thus, the official name of the school became Centro Educativo Ignacio Manuel Altamirano (CEIMA), and it was recognized by the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1970:⁸ “The ‘Ignacio M.

Altamirano' school in Mexico City was inaugurated on August 10, 1980. This new building has ample space for 700 students."⁹

Gabriel González Castro and his wife, Amadita, were committed to sending their children to a Christian school. The González family lived on the outskirts of Querétaro, which was outside of the greater Mexico City area. It was impossible for them to take their children to school, return home for their activities, and then return to school to pick them up. Because of their strong desire to provide a Christian education for their children, Amadita would take her children to school, stay at the school all day, and then take them back home in the afternoon. Amadita ended up studying secondary school with her children.¹⁰

Because of the distance, it was difficult for many children of pastors and of church members to attend CEIMA. In response, the school implemented the government's tele-secondary school system. One of the main requirements was to set aside and equip a classroom specifically for the program. The school made every effort to comply. Televisions were obtained with the help of the Tacubaya and Monumento churches, and pastors Samuel Guízar and Jorge E. Campos made all the arrangements for air conditioning to be installed in this special classroom.

CEIMA's Tele-Secondary School Program and Growth

The televised program was launched with 30 students. It was a requirement that a teacher be a monitor of the tele-secondary school program. The first monitor was appointed by the Secretary of Public Education (SEP). The monitor's job was to ensure that the students would be attentive to the televised classes. At the end of the first week of classes, the problem of Sabbath hours arose. The monitor informed his superiors, who summoned the institution's leaders. After many negotiations and much prayer, the problem was resolved. The first Adventist teacher to monitor the tele-classroom was Limber Salazar Mendiguchia, a graduate of Colegio Linda Vista who integrated faith with learning. The tele-secondary school program was a success from the start.¹¹

The institution began to grow steadily, and the enrollment increased significantly. During the administration of Neftalí Rodríguez, it was decided to remodel and restructure the school building. Through the collaboration of Adventist churches, organizations, and private donors, this goal was achieved. The main support came from Central Mexican Conference administration who supervised the educational institution. The architectural work was carried out by Héctor Javier Pimentel Sánchez, and the new redesigned structure was inaugurated on November 1, 1979.¹²

The incorporations with the Mexican educational authorities, the Secretary of Public Education (SEP), and the Colegio de Bachilleres (COLBACH), were carried out in the following order:

The primary school was incorporated into SEP in 1945.

The preparatory school was incorporated into COLBACH on September 9, 1980.

The secondary school was incorporated into SEP on November 29, 1989.

Preschool was incorporated into SEP on February 10, 2009.

CEIMA's Ideals

The ideals that have inspired the Centro Educativo Ignacio Manuel Altamirano throughout its history are outlined in its:

Mission – to serve the community's children and youth and prepare them to be useful citizens on this Earth while preparing them to be citizens of Heaven.

Vision – to be an institution recognized for fostering eternal principles and values that favor the integral development of students in physical, mental, social, and spiritual aspects, thus ensuring that education results from the application of effective contemporary academic techniques.

Values – Obedience, Respect, Honesty, Perseverance, Courtesy, Responsibility, and Justice.

In 2006, CEIMA began reporting to the newly established Azteca Mexican Mission, and in 2011, the Mission became Azteca Mexican Conference. In 2012, the administration of the conference and the school board agreed to adopt an educational model. The model, based on Adventist philosophy, would solidify the core objectives of the Adventist faith without losing sight of the academic achievements of teachers and students.

In 2013, the school celebrated the 70 years of existence of Adventist education in Mexico City. For this special occasion, CEIMA's façade was renovated with a more modern and functional design. Architect Max Simón Vázquez directed the remodeling work, and the work was completed during the administration of Pastor Eleazar Cipriano Martínez, president of the Azteca Mexican Conference.¹³ In 2015, the school board approved the remodeling of the kindergarten area under the direction of Architect Héctor Javier Pimentel Sánchez.¹⁴

Challenges and Expectations for the Future

In 2021, despite the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the hand of God guided the educational work at CEIMA. During that school year, when enrollment in many other schools decreased, enrollment at CEIMA increased. Because of this, a smart school network was implemented with coverage throughout its facilities.

For more than five decades, CEIMA has served and continues to serve Adventist children and youth, instilling in them scientific knowledge and the knowledge of God so that everyone who enrolls in the school remembers that they are being educated with the hope of redemption.

The administration and staff of Centro Educativo Ignacio Manuel Altamirano exist to benefit each student, support each teacher, and work with local SDA churches and with the administration of the Azteca Mexican Conference to cater to every school-age child as a candidate for heaven.

Directors

Neftalí Rodríguez Reyes (1970-1984); Eliasib Sánchez (1984-1987); Lorenzo Tello Gallegos (1987-1990); Celia Rosas Vázquez (1990-1993); Orley Sánchez Jiménez (1993-1994); Josefina Mora de la Rosa 1994-1998); Rubén Alfredo Porras Torres (1998-2001); Israel Rodríguez Vázquez (2001-2006); Ezequiel Reyes Bonilla (2007); Efraín Reyes Márquez (2007-2009); Ángela Silva Noguerón (2009-2012); Natanael Caamal Turrubiates (2013-2022); Enoc Márquez Díaz (2023-).

SOURCES

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"That Harold House..." *First Meeting: General Conference Committee*. XIV (June 11, 1930). Accessed August 18, 2025. <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1930-06.pdf>

NOTES

1. "That Harold House..." *First Meeting: General Conference Committee*, XIV (June 11, 1930): 2, accessed August 18, 2025, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1930-06.pdf>.
2. Félix Cortés Antonio and Velino Salazar Escarpulli, *Esforzados y valientes: Veintisiete historias repletas de acción y aventuras* (Montemorelos, Nuevo León, México: Editorial Perspectiva y Análisis, 2015): 106.
3. Velino Salazar Escarpulli, *100 Años de Adventismo en México* (Montemorelos, Nuevo León, México: Centro de Producción Unión Mexicana del Norte, 1997): 104.

4. Victoria Funes, interview by Raúl Rodríguez Antonio, Mexico, March 7, 1995.
5. Samuel Guízar, interview by author Alejandro Meza Gómez, Mexico City, Mexico, September 25, 2019.
6. José de Jesús Sánchez García, interview by author Natanael Caamal Turrubiates, Mexico City, Mexico, May 5, 2021.
7. Ibid.
8. "Mexico City Secondary School (Centro Educativo Ignacio Manuel Altamirano)," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1981): 378, accessed August 18, 2025, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB1981.pdf>.
9. Carlos Aeschlimann, "Adventist Secondary School Inaugurated in Mexico City," *Inter-American News Flashes*, no. 254 (October 28, 1980): 2, accessed August 18, 2025, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/IAM/IAM19801028-254.pdf>.
10. Samuel Guízar, interview by author Alejandro Meza Gómez, Mexico City, Mexico, September 25, 2019.
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