



Current North Peru Union Mission headquarters, 2020.

Photo courtesy of Wilmer de la Cruz.

North Peru Union Mission

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North Peru Union Mission (Unión Peruana del Norte, or UPN) is an administrative unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the territory of the South American Division. Its headquarters is at Los Álamos Street, 301, (Central Highway), Zip Code 15472, in the district of Chaclacayo, province of Lima, department of Lima, Republic of Peru.¹

Territory and Statistics

North Peru Union Mission operates in the departments of Cajamarca, La Libertad, Amazonas, Lambayeque, Piura, Tumbes, and San Martín, as well as the provinces of Ancash, Alto Amazonas, Bongará, Chachapoyas, Luya, and Rodríguez de Mendoza in the department of Amazonas. It also includes part of the province of Lima and parts of the district of Huaral, Huaura, and the Callao region. The estimated population of this territory is 15,896,856. Under the UPN administration there are 1,419 churches and 1,730 groups. The number of SDA members in this field is 208,056. In the entire territory of the union, the ratio is one Adventist per 76 inhabitants.²

In the UPN territory there are five administrative units.³ These are: East Central Peru Conference, located at Jirón Washington, 1807, office 501, Lima,⁴ with 32,909 members and 327 congregations; North Pacific Conference, located at Borodin Street, 755, Urbanización Primavera, Trujillo,⁵ serving 50,934 members and 910 congregations; West Central Peru Mission, at Jr. La Confraternidad, 492, Los Olivos, Lima,⁶ with 34,062 members and 408 congregations; Northeast Peru Mission, located at Jr. Ramírez Hurtado, 321, Tarapoto,⁷ with 37,305 members and 625 congregations; and North Peru Mission,⁸ located at La Pinta, 235, La Victoria, Chiclayo, serving 52,846 members and 879 congregations.⁹

Under its administration, UPN has 30 school units in the primary and secondary sectors. At the primary level there are 5,513 students and 449 staff members, of which 338 are teachers. At secondary level there are 4,003 students. At the higher education level there is Peruvian Union University (Universidad Peruana Unión, or UPeU) which has 12,648 students¹⁰ spread out in three campuses.¹¹

UPeU has its main headquarters in Lima, at Km 19.5 on Highway Central, Ñaña, Chosica. The other two university campuses are in the cities of Tarapoto and Juliaca. This institution offers six undergraduate courses in business, two in humanities, five in engineering and architecture, four in health, plus the theology studies course. In addition, UPeU also offers doctorate programs, master's degrees, specialized courses, and second specializations.¹² Within the university campus there is factory of products labeled *Unión (Union)*, which supplies the highest quality bakery products.¹³ Another institution on campus is Printing Union (Imprenta Unión), which is a publishing house that produces various types of materials for the university, advertising, educational, and cultural.¹⁴

UPN manages New Time Productions (Producciones Nuevo Tiempo) and New Time Peru (Nuevo Tiempo Peru), which is the Adventist center for content production and transmission for radio and television in the Peruvian territory. Nuevo Tiempo Peru is a network of 24 radio stations spread throughout the country. It also has an open channel for free Digital Terrestrial Television for the entire capital city of Lima (channel 41.1) and has contracts with important cable operators that transmit their programming to different cities of the country. This institution is in the same building as the union office in Chaclacayo, Lima.¹⁵

UPN is responsible for North Home and Health Educational Service (Servicio Educativo Hogar y Salud Norte), which operates at España Avenue, 646, 2nd floor, in Breña, Lima.¹⁶ To meet the demands of the mission field, UPN has 3,576 staff members, pastors, administrators, church employees, and other officials. Among these there are 259 accredited ministers, 111 accredited missionaries, 55 licensed missionaries, and 96 with ministerial licenses.¹⁷

Organizational History

Adventism arrived in the Peruvian territory through the work of two groups of lay members in 1898. The first group worked in Lima, and the other worked in Arequipa in the southern part of the country. Around 1900, the group in Lima received a visit from Pastors G. H. Baber and Enrique Balada. Balada stayed and worked in Lima for a year. In 1905 Pastor F. L. Perry was put in charge of the church activities in that region. The work carried out there was somewhat successful and, in the following year, Peruvian Mission, now East Central Peru Conference, was established.¹⁸ At that time there were about 20 Seventh-day keepers and only one organized Adventist church in all of Peru.¹⁹

Following establishment of the mission, evangelistic initiatives became more frequent in that region. The efforts employed and the impact they had on the lives of the Aymara and Quechua Indians brought inspiration and courage to many missionaries who also began to preach on the coast, mountains, and jungles of Peru. One of the Church initiatives was the organization of a school that helped to provide literacy for many natives and assisted in the recovery of several who had been excluded from society because of their addiction to alcoholic beverages and the coca leaf. Thus, due to Adventist education, many previously marginalized people became citizens who were respected by society and by their families.²⁰

Around 1919, Pastors L. D. Minner and E. H. Wilcox traveled through northern Peru. Along the way they organized two groups of Adventist believers—one in the province of Ascope (La Libertad) with 29 members, and the other in the province of Contumazá (Cajamarca) with 25 members.²¹ At the same time, thanks to the tireless work of missionaries such as Harry B. Lundquist, J. M. Howell, and Fernando Osorio, Lima Training School was established in Lima. The goal of this school was to offer basic education and to prepare native workers to work in the cause of the Lord in Peru. Years later the name of the school was changed to Inca Union Training School, now Peruvian Union University, and its location was transferred to Ñaña, a larger place with better climatic conditions and distant from the capital, but still in Lima.²²

Within the 1920s and 1930s, churches were established in the Casca district and in the Ascope and Contumazá provinces, under the leadership of Pastor Agustín Alva y Alva. At the same time, through the canvasser's collaboration,²³ Adventism reached the city of Trujillo in the province of La Libertad. A series of meetings were held there on Union Street. In 1942, under the leadership of Pastor Agustín, a meeting house was rented at Jirón San Martín, 880, Trujillo. The following year the Adventist Church was permanently organized in the city of

Trujillo.²⁴

At that time the missionaries Raúl Chávez and Cayetano Díaz worked regularly in the province of Cajamarca and in the cities of Celendín, Bambamarca, Chota, Cutervo, Cajabamba, and Huamachuco. Both were natives from the province of Celendín and were self-supporting workers. As a result of their work, many people became interested in studying the Bible and learning more about Adventism. In the 1940s, three families were meeting in an Adventist group and later new families were baptized and integrated into the group of believers.²⁵

In the early 1960s, due to growth in the number of members in Peru, there was need for reorganization in the church structure of that region. Thus, the leadership of Inca Union Mission, now South Peru Union Mission, proposed the creation of a new mission to manage the development of the Adventist work in the northern region of the country. At its 1960 Annual Council, the South American Division approved the proposed territory restructuring of the Peruvian Mission and it was renamed Misión Peruana Central, now East Central Peru Conference (Asociación Peruana Central Este). In this reorganization, North Peru Mission was established and it began to operate in 1961,²⁶ with 3,968 members distributed in 14 churches and with administrative headquarters at San José, 690, in the city of Chiclayo.²⁷

Several missionary projects were implemented by Inca Union Mission in the territory of Peru and the church in this region experienced consistent growth in the 1970s and 1980s. In that period the Adventist Church reached a total of 58,834 members and 122 churches in the northern region of Peru.²⁸ In addition, Inca Union Training School went through changes in its structure and, in 1983, obtained government approval for the creation of Inca Union University. Later, around 1995, through law no. 26542, the name of that educational institution was changed to Peruvian Union University, as it remains today.²⁹

In the early 2000s the Church expanded greatly in the northern region of Peru. North Peru Mission reached 110,887 members, distributed in 285 churches and 737 groups.³⁰ In order to better serve the Church in the region, the leaders decided to reorganize the territory and establish a new administrative unit. On November 23, 2000, the creation of North Pacific Mission, now North Pacific Conference, was approved, with headquarters established on March 18, 2001, in Trujillo.³¹ Soon after, Peru Union Mission, formerly Inca Union Mission, made plans to divide the territory of East Peru Mission. An investigation commission was formed with representation from SAD, Peru Union Mission, and East Peru Mission. As a result, Northeast Peru Mission was created and based in the city of Tarapoto. The mission started its activities in 2003 with 96 churches and 72,899 members.³²

The establishment of these new administrative units was the result of accelerated growth in membership of the Peruvian church. In addition to the great preaching of the gospel message in that country, population growth was also taking place in the remote areas of Lima and other provincial capitals.³³ Under these circumstances, SAD and Peru Union Mission leaders also made plans for the administrative restructuring of the entire territory of Peru. On April 12 and 13, 2006, in the Spring Meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee, the committee approved the restructuring of Peru Union Mission into two union missions—South Peru Union

Mission and North Peru Union Mission.³⁴

When it was organized, Unión Peruana del Norte was responsible for one conference and three missions: North Central Peru Conference, now East Central Peru Conference, North Pacific, North Peru, and Northeast Peru Missions. Since its establishment, UPN has been responsible for the larger part of the northern region of Peru, as well as part of the province of Lima and Callao.³⁵ The first administrative headquarters of this union was at Avenue Comandante Espinar, 610, Miraflores, in Lima. A short time later it moved to another building, on the same block and avenue, no. 650. UPN began its work managing 825 churches and caring for 345,041 members. Its first administrative leaders were Pastor Orlando Ramos, president, and Pastor Yordan Santa Cruz, treasurer. Later, Pastor Barito Lazo was elected secretary.³⁶

The years 2009 and 2010 were marked by advances in the missionary activities in northern Peru. The number of churches and groups had increased considerably, with a total of 978 churches and 1,615 groups.³⁷ Due to these advances, on January 1, 2010, North Pacific Mission changed its status to North Pacific Conference.³⁸ Also, in 2010, North Central Peru Conference was reorganized, having its name changed to East Central Peru Conference and assuming direction of the work in the department of Ancash and part of northern Lima.³⁹ In the same year, the UPN administrative committee approved division of the territory of North Central Peru Conference, establishing West Central Peru Conference, which started operating in 2011 with 37,089 Adventists and 167 churches.⁴⁰ These reorganizations of territory show how many benefits UPN brought to Adventism in that part of the country.⁴¹

As the Church grew in the northern region, the UPN leaders realized the need for a new and larger headquarters building. A plot of land was purchased to build a more suitable building that could better represent the institutional image of the Adventist Church and better meet the demands of the members. Construction began at the end of 2013 and the new administrative headquarters inauguration took place during the SAD Annual Council, on November 1, 2014,⁴² when a thanksgiving service was held.⁴³ The new UPN building is in the Chaclacayo district, in Lima. In the first year, the official address was Avenida Nicolás Ayllón (at Central Highway intersection). Later this institution changed its address to Los Álamos Street, 301, without having to change the location of the building.⁴⁴

On the morning of November 1, 2014—the day of the headquarters inauguration—more than 40,000 Adventists gathered for a missionary event at the Estadio Monumental (Monumental Stadium), east of Lima. In addition to church members and church authorities from Peru, there were representatives from the South American Division and the General Conference in attendance. On that occasion there was a thanksgiving program and the launch of the Hope Channel in an open signal for Lima (digital channel 41.1). The morning's program concluded with the baptism of a couple who learned about the message through New Time Productions.⁴⁵ Since then, New Time Productions has been operating at the UPN headquarters and its work has transformed the lives of many people, either directly or indirectly.⁴⁶

Many missionary endeavors have been promoted in the UPN territory since its establishment. Members and leaders of North Peru Union Mission promote the ministries of the Pathfinder Club⁴⁷ and the Adventurer Club.⁴⁸ Through these clubs, many children, teenagers, and even their families are led to Christ. Programs are carried out to strengthen the children's daily communion with God, in addition to biblical instruction and practical training. One of these programs is the "Camporí" (Camporee).⁴⁹ From January 25 to 29, 2017, the III Camporí de la UPN (III UPN Camporee) gathered about 7,000 Pathfinders for a program whose motto was *Adorar al Creador* (*Worship the Creator*) and which took place at the UPeU facilities in Lima.⁵⁰ There are 614 Pathfinder Clubs, with 13,554 participants, and 428 Adventurer Clubs, with 7,513 members in all the UPN territory.⁵¹

As one of the projects developed to encourage the communion, mission, and discipleship of members, North Peru Union Mission held, on November 15 and 16, 2017, the II Congreso *Discipulado, gente que cuida de gente* (II Congress *Discipleship, people who care for people*). The program emphasized the activities that drive the Church. These are: "Study of the Bible, Small Groups,⁵² Discipleship Pairs, Church Planting, Baptisms, and Faithful Donors." The whole program was planned to bring the Church into communion with God as a way of life. The leaders of northern Peru, the UPN, and the SAD attended the meeting. On that same occasion, plans for the future of the Adventist work in the region were presented, among which were: "the strengthening of small pastoral groups, the focus on discipleship with the School of Theology students [and in] the 100 missionaries from the Universidad Peruana Unión (Peruvian Union University) who will go to different countries of the world."⁵³

In 2019, in order to strengthen the faith of members and promote evangelism through local churches, the Adventist Church leaders in Peru decided to emphasize the Bible schools established in the New Time Productions host churches in that country. This decision was based on the fact that, while New Time Productions attracts people through radio, television, and the Internet, interested people are also invited to attend and participate in Adventist churches in order to learn more about Jesus. Thus, the preaching should be carried out in an integrated manner.⁵⁴ In 2020, given the needs that arose due to the pandemic caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19), the Adventist Church had to take temporary measures for the continuation of the preaching work. In July and August, the church in northern Peru held a digital evangelistic campaign which resulted in the baptism of 4,409 people.⁵⁵

This result is the most recent missionary achievement that God has given to His people in northern Peru. However, there are still many evangelistic goals to be achieved. While there are obstacles to overcome in the advancement of the gospel, God's blessing in the past inspires lessons of trust, commitment, and perseverance that serve as a precious encouragement. With the certainty that even in the midst of difficulties there will be new opportunities to spread the Word of God, the UPN Adventists will continue to announce the message of hope until the second coming of Jesus.

Chronology of Administrative Leaders⁵⁶

Presidents: Orlando Ramos (2007-2014); Edward Heidinger (2015); Bill Quispe (2016-present).

Secretaries: Barito Lazo (2007-2010); Edward Heidinger (2011); Enzo Chávez (2012-2015); Juan Saldaña (2016-2017); Daniel Montalván (2018); Alberto Carranza (2019-present).

Treasurers: Yordan Santa Cruz (2007-2011); Jorge A. Montero Guerrero (2012-2015); Walter Murillo (2016-present).⁵⁷

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57. More information about North Peru Union Mission can be found at <http://upn.adventistas.org/> or on social networks - Facebook: [@adventistas.upn](https://www.facebook.com/adventistas.upn), Instagram: [@adventistasupn](https://www.instagram.com/adventistasupn), Twitter: [@AdventistasUPN](https://twitter.com/AdventistasUPN) and YouTube: [\[Seventh-day Adventist Church -Peru \(UPN\)\]](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...).

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