Minahasa Conference

SWINEYS TANDIDIO

Swineys Tandidio is an ordained minister and currently serving as the director of the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department as well as the Director of the Adventist Youth Ministry Department of Minahasa Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Manado, Indonesia. He is married to Marline Sepang, and they are blessed with two children.

The Minahasa Conference of the East Indonesia Union Conference in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division has its roots in the North Celebes Mission established in 1923, which gave way to the South Minahasa Mission in 1971.
and was reorganized into Minahasa Conference in 2009.

Minahasa Conference, which has its headquarters in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, covers the following territories: “the municipality of Tomohon, and the regencies of Minahasa, and South Minahasa in the province of North Sulawesi,” Indonesia.\(^1\) The combination of these regions would cover an area of 3,723.9278 square kilometers (1437.8 square miles).\(^2\) The conference headquarters is in Tomohon, Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. In Bahasa, Minahasa Conference is officially known as Daerah Konferens Minahasa (DKM).

The Minahasa Conference (MC) is the largest conference in Indonesia in terms of the number of churches. As of June 30, 2018, it had 220 churches with 28,457 members in the total population of 918,768.\(^3\)

The statistics of religions in the territory is as follows: Christianity 97.93 percent, Islam 1.81 percent, Buddhist 0.11 percent, Hindu 0.10 percent, and Confucianism 0.05 percent.\(^4\) By the month of October 2019, the total population of the whole territory is approximately 752,756\(^5\); while the total number of the Seventh-day Adventist Church members in the conference is 29,251.\(^6\) In comparing the Seventh-day Adventist Church members to the total population within the territory, Adventists consist of 3.89 percent, and the ratio of Adventists versus the general population by October 2019 was 1:26.

**Origin of the Seventh-day Adventist Work in the Territory**

The history of God’s work in DKM dawns with an indigenous youth of Minahasa Tenggara (Southeast Minahasa) who received the Advent message in Batavia, which nowadays is known as Jakarta.\(^7\) The young man was Samuel Rantung, who was baptized in Batavia, on March 29, 1911, by Pastor Ralph W. Munson. This Minahasan young man then worked to help the publication of books and magazines *Utusan Perjanjian Melayu* in Sukabumi, West Java, a publication led by Pr. R. W. Munson.\(^8\) In 1913, Rantung went to Singapore to study theology at the Seventh-day Adventist seminary.\(^9\) Unfortunately, the seminary had not yet accepted new students by the year.\(^10\) So, he left for Malacca in the southern Malay Peninsula to find a job, and there he worked as a facilitator in a rubber plantation until 1915.\(^11\) In that year, an English Training School was opened in Singapore, and Rantung went back to Singapore to be a Bible teacher.\(^12\)

In 1920, Rantung was on leave for three months because of an illness. Because of the instability of his health, he then returned to his hometown, Lowu Ratahan, Southeast Minahasa, North Sulawesi.\(^13\) During his three months in Lowu Ratahan, he taught the Sabbath message to his relatives, and after the end of that leave period, he returned to Singapore. But, there he was sick again and took another leave.\(^14\) Due to this sickness, for a short time, he stayed in Garut, West Java. But while in Garut, he was visited by Pastors F. A. Detamore and Albert Munson, who directed him to become a gospel teacher in Ratahan, accompanied by M. E. Diredja, who had served on the editorial staff for Adventist magazines.\(^15\) As a result of Rantung and Diredja’s work in Ratahan, as many as 22 people received Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, and they were baptized by Pastor Detamore on December 30, 1921. The names of these newly baptized members were recorded by Rantung and
Diredja: Hendrik Rantung, Katiwulan Malingkas, Marsela Rantung, Adilina Rantung, Manuel Rantung, Sartji Rantung-Langingi, Dorkas Onsoe-Rantung, Lukas Onsoe, Lina Onsoe, Martina Onsoe, Karlina Wahongan, Brodus Wahongan, Yeltji Ole, Maria Siwi, Anton Londa, Lukas Ngongoloi, Serfius Rantung, Robert Rolangon, Jusuf Antou, Magdalena Antou, Simon Antou, and Alfritz Pasuhuk.\(^6\)

Those newly baptized Adventists, as the fruits of God’s work,\(^7\) were most probably the first recorded or known Adventists of the future DKM and perhaps also that of the future East Indonesia Union Conference.\(^8\) The next day, after their baptism, those 22 souls, with Samuel Rantung and his wife, and Mr. E. M. Diredja, a total of 25 persons, were organized by Pastor Albert Munson to be the first church in DKM and in what would become the East Indonesia Union Conference.\(^9\) This church is officially known as Gereja Masehi Advent Hari Ketujuh (GMAHK) Jemaat Pioneer di Indonesia Timur. Three years later, according to the testimony of Pastor Albert Munson, as told by Mr. Kaleb Onsoe, there were 188 baptized members in Minahasa and 500 souls who had not yet been baptized but had believed in the Advent message within the year of 1924.\(^10\)

Formative Events That Led to the Organization

The existing record shows that the Advent message was first spread in Ratahan by Samuel Rantung among his close relatives. Then the fruits of God’s work resulted in the Advent message spreading throughout the central and eastern regions of Indonesia and in the emergence of the first Seventh-day Adventist churches by 1920.

The decade 1921–1930 was a crucial yet difficult period for the Advent message in the region. At that time, some Minahasan people were interested in the Advent message, but at the same time, the missionaries and those who received baptism endured much persecution. Had the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the region been discouraged by difficulties and stopped evangelism due to all persecution they endured, there would probably be no DKM. Therefore, it is worthwhile to remember the faith experiences of the members of the churches that were organized within that decade. Some of their legacies may be heard from the aged members, and others are recorded in the book *Gereja Masehi Advent Hari Ketujuh di Indonesia: Perintisan dan Pengembangannya*, compiled by Emil H. Tambunan. Those first churches organized by Pastor Albert Munson are as follows:

1. GMAHK Jemaat Pioneer di Indonesia Timur, organized on December 31, 1921. This is the pioneer church of what would become the East Indonesian Union Conference.\(^21\)

2. GMAHK Jemaat Pioneer Passo, organized on May 18, 1924.\(^22\)

3. GMAHK Jemaat Pioneer Tondano, organized on December 24, 1924.\(^23\)

4. GMAHK Jemaat SENTRUM Kakas, organized on November 25, 1926.\(^24\)
5. GMAHK Jemaat Pioneer Watumea, organized on March 7, 1926.

6. GMAHK Jemaat Pioneer Tandengan, organized on February 16, 1928.

7. GMAHK Jemaat Pioneer Tincep, organized on August 2, 1928.

**Official Organization**

At the beginning in 1923, DKM was organized as the North Celebes Mission.

On October 16, 1970, the North Celebes Mission was divided by a vote in the East Indonesia Union Mission (EIUM) Executive Committee. The meeting was chaired by Pastor A. M. Bartlett and recorded by Pastor R. Wawondatu, who recorded the action as follows: “1970-212 Voted: To recommend to the Division that North Celebes Mission will be divided into the Missions and the officers of the Missions will be chosen at the Union annual meeting, December 1970.” The officers of the union who made this plan were Pastor A. M. Bartlett as the union president, Pastor Wolter Raranta as the union executive secretary, and Mr. Kaleb Onsoe as the union treasurer. As a realization of the union's recommendation, in December 1970, the South Minahasa Mission (SMM) was organized by the division.

The first officers of the SMM were Pastor H. Mamanua as the president and Mr. F. Karamoy as the secretary/treasurer. They were chosen in December 1970 at the annual meeting of the EIUM. The territory of the SMM included the present-day Minahasa Regency, South Minahasa Regency, Southeast Minahasa Regency, Tomohon Municipal, East Bolmong Regency, North Bolmong Regency, South Bolmong Regency, Kota Mobagu Municipal, and the whole Gorontalo Province.

**Evolution and the Dividing of the Organization**

By 1994 rapid growth in the SMM led the union to recommend to the Asia Pacific Division (APD) to upgrade her status from mission to conference, and in September 1995, SMM became a conference per the action voted by the Union Executive Committee on February 23, 1995, as follows: “95-041 Conference Status of SMM: To approve to pass on a request to APD for granting full Conference Status to SMM, September 1st, 1995.” The South Minahasa Conference (SMC) territory included Bolmong Mongondow, Gorontalo, and South Minahasa. The first officers of the conference were Pastor Noldy Sakul as the president, Pastor W. F. Rumambi as the executive secretary, and Mr. T. Liling as the treasurer.

In 2004, SMC was divided, and a new field was born according to an action voted on November 28, 2003, as follows: “2003-241: Menyetujui pembukaan Field (Wilayah) Bolaang Mongondow dan Gorontalo, berlaku sejak 1 Januari 2004.” Since January 1, 2004, SMC has been divided, and then officially known as MC in English and DKM in Bahasa. The new field, Bolaang Mongondow and Gorontalo Attached Field, covers the present-day East
Bolmong Regency, North Bolmong Regency, South Bolmong Regency, Kota Mobagu Municipal, the whole Gorontalo Province, and Modoinding Sub-district of South Minahasa Regency. The first officers of this field were Pastor E. M. Senewe as the president, Pastor F. Sepang as the executive secretary, and Mr. S. Kairupan as the treasurer. They were chosen on November 30, 2003, by the Executive Committee of EIUC, with the action numbers 2003-242 for the election of the field president, 2003-243 for the election of the field executive secretary, and 2003-244 for the election of the field treasurer. The union officers who undertook this effort were Pastor B. J. Sepang (president), Pastor N. Sakul (executive secretary), and Mr. H. Sumanti (treasurer).

Based on the minutes of the annual meeting of EIUC held on November 25–27, 2015, this field’s status was later upgraded to a mission on February 19–20, 2016. The minutes read: “2015-121: Inaugurasi Daerah Misi Bolaang Mongondow dan Gorontalo. Berdasarkan keputusan Divisi Asia Pasifik Selatan pada tanggal 6 November 2015 tentang perubahan status wilayah Bolaang Mongondow dan Gorontalo menjadi daerah Mis. Diputuskan: Menyetujui inaugurasi Daerah Misi Bolaang Mongondow dan Gorontalo diadakan pada tanggal 19–20 Februari 2016.” The inauguration was led by the Southern Asia-Pacific Division president, Pastor Samuel Saw. The first officers elected for the mission were Pastor N. Kaumpungan as the president, Pastor S. Gosal as the executive secretary, and Mr. R. Gara as the treasurer. They were chosen on November 25–27, 2015, by the Executive Committee of EIUC, at the annual union meeting, with the action numbers of 2015-161 for the election of the president, 2015-162 for the election of the executive secretary, and 2015-163 for the election of the treasurer. The union officers who arranged this inauguration program were Pastor S. Y. Bindosano (president), Pastor H. Sibilang (executive secretary), and Mr. V. Raranta (treasurer).

Membership of the Organization

The work of God has grown rapidly in SMM, in SMC, and then in MC or DKM. As of October 2019, DKM had 123 organized churches, 41 Sabbath School branches, and 18 assemblies. In 1970, SMM had started her work in spreading the eternal gospel with 8,844 church members, and as of October 2019, DKM had 29,251 church members. The following records concerning her membership from 1970 to October 2019 show that the church has been healthily growing.

A Record of the Membership in the Quinquenniums from 1970 to 1995 (Mission Era):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>8,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>9,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>10,315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Record of the Membership in the Quinquenniums from 1995 to 2020 (Conference era):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>16,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>13,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>16,77043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>17,85644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>19,20845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>23,02546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>26,44147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 (October)</td>
<td>29,25148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Institutions

The Minahasa Conference has 47 schools. One of these schools is a boarding school, known as SLA Tompaso II in Bahasa, or officially named as North Sulawesi Academy (NSA). NSA is the oldest boarding school in the EIUC. This educational institution was established on August 16, 1948, with the name North Celebes Training School. The name was changed to North Sulawesi Academy in 1962. NSA has earned many accolades from the government, as well as from the Adventist Church, due to its accomplishments. The conference also runs an English Training School, called Tomohon English Conversation School (TECS), which is located in Tomohon City, at the headquarters of DKM.

List of Officers

South Minahasa Mission: President

South Minahasa Mission: Secretary-Treasurer

South Minahasa Mission: Executive Secretary

South Minahasa Mission: Treasurer

South Minahasa Conference: President


South Minahasa Conference: Executive Secretary


South Minahasa Conference: Treasurer


Minahasa Conference: President


Minahasa Conference: Executive Secretary


Minahasa Conference, Treasurer

Mardy Rattu (2011–2015); Stenly Rangingisan (2016–2017); Jimmy F. Pesik (2017–)

The address of the DKM headquarters has been the same from 1970 to the present time:

Kantor Gereja Masehi Advent Hari Ketujuh (GMAHK)
Daerah Konferens Minahasa (DKM)
d/a: Jalan Babe Palar, No. 61, Matani III,
Kec. Tomohon Tengah, Kota Tomohon,
Propinsi Sulawesi Utara, Indonesia.
Kode Wilayah 71.73.02.1017,
Kode Pos 95443

SOURCES


_Seventh-day Adventist Online Yearbook_ Accessed January 9, 2020,  


https://minselkab.bps.go.id/statictable.html.


https://tomohonkota.bps.go.id/statictable.html.


## NOTES

1. _Seventh-day Adventist Online Yearbook, “Minahasa Conference,”_ accessed January 9, 2020,  

2. See “Tabel Statistik Terbaru,” Badan Pusat Statistik: Kabupaten Minahasa,  
https://minahasakab.bps.go.id/statictable.html; “Tabel Statistik Terbaru,” Badan Pusat Statistik: Kabupaten Minahasa Selatan,  
https://minselkab.bps.go.id/statictable.html; “Tabel Statistik Terbaru,” Badan Pusat Statistik: Kabupaten Minahasa Tenggara,  
https://mitrakab.bps.go.id/statictable.html; “Tabel Statistik Terbaru,” Badan Pusat Statistik: Kota Tomohon,  
https://tomohonkota.bps.go.id/statictable.html; “Tabel Statistik Terbaru,” Badan Pusat Statistik: Kabupaten Bolaang Mongondow,  

3. _Seventh-day Adventist Online Yearbook, “Minahasa Conference,”_ accessed January 9, 2020,  


8. Johny Rantung, son of Samuel Rantung, “Sejarah Hidup Samuel Rantung,” interview by Swineys Tandidio, Jakarta, October 20, 2019. Dr. Johny Rantung is a former dean of the Faculty of Theology of Universitas Advent Indonesia, Bandung, West Java.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid. A health examination by a medical doctor, however, concluded that Samuel Rantung was not ill. His family then believed that his illness was God's miraculous way to cause him to return to his hometown so that his relatives might hear the Advent message.

15. Johny Rantung, “Sejarah Hidup Samuel Rantung,” interview. The medical doctor finally concluded that he was healthy. He was then convinced that it was God's miraculous way to awaken him to return to Minahasa to serve his people with God's word.


17. Ibid.


29. Ibid. The union's minutes in this era were written in English. In the next era, the minutes of the union are written in Bahasa.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.


34. Ibid.

35. Translation: “2015-121: Inauguration of Bolaang Mongondow and Gorontalo Mission. Be based on the decision of Southern Asia Pacific Division on November 6, 2015, concerning the changing status of Bolaang Mongondow and Gorontalo District from a District to a Mission. Voted: To approve that the inauguration of Bolaang Mongondow and Gorontalo Mission will be held on February 19–20, 2016.” Arsip GMAHK UKIKT, Konferensi GMAHK UKIKT, November 25–27, 2015.

36. In July 2017, Pastor N. Kaumpungan was appointed by the Church organization to serve the Lord as the president of MC.


40. Ibid., Tahun 1980; Liling, “Keanggotaan Jemaat.”

41. Ibid., Tahun 1985; Liling, “Keanggotaan Jemaat.”

42. Ibid., Tahun 1990; Liling, “Keanggotaan Jemaat.”

43. Ibid., Tahun 1995; Liling, “Keanggotaan Jemaat.”

44. Ibid., Tahun 2000; Liling, “Keanggotaan Jemaat.”

45. Ibid., Tahun 2005.

46. Ibid., Tahun 2010.

47. Ibid., Tahun 2015.


49. Ibid.

50. Tambunan, Gereja Masehi Advent Hari Ketujuh di Indonesia, 432.

51. Ibid., 432–33.
From the dawn of the mission/conference, the officers and departmental directors have always been Indonesians. At the time when this article was written, the following are the departmental directors:

- Jack Mundung (Ministerial Association secretary)
- Swineys Tandidio (Sabbath School and Personal Ministries and Youth Ministries director)
- Rouland C. A. Raranta (Stewardship director)
- G. Malinty (Education director)
- John Tendean (Publishing and Communication director)
- Julien Kaumpungan-Tumewu (Shepherdess International coordinator and Women's Ministries director)
- Deetje Pesik-Najoan (Family Ministries, Children's Ministries, and Health Ministries director)