



Northwest Mexican Mission headquarters.

Photo courtesy of Northwest Mexican Mission.

Northwest Mexican Mission

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The Northwest Mexican Mission is located in the north-central zone of Mexico. It is part of the North Mexican Union Conference and is composed of the following territories: the states of Durango, and Zacatecas; the city of Torreon, and the municipalities of Francisco I. Madero, Matamoros, Parras de la Fuente, San Pedro, and Viesca in the state of Coahuila; and the municipalities of Colotlan, Huejucar, Huejuquilla el Alto, Mezquitic, Ojuelos, Santa Maria de los Angeles, and Totatiche in the state of Jalisco. Northwest Mexican Mission headquarters is in

Torreón, Coahuila, Mexico.

Statistics (June 30, 2019): Churches, 48; membership, 13,163; population, 4,747,662.¹

The predominant religion is Catholicism, and its official language is Spanish.² The economy of the region is based on mining, agriculture, wine production, and production of chemicals, as well as dairy farming.³

The Northwest Mexican Mission is one of three missions and eight conferences of the North Mexican Union Conference, of the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. At the beginning of 2019, the mission had 13,460 members, 47 organized churches, and 42 Sabbath Schools, distributed over 11 districts and cared for by five ordained pastors, eight licensed ministers, and seven office personnel.⁴ The headquarters of the Northwest Mission are located on 464 Wenceslao Rodríguez Street, Centro Colony, Torreón, Coahuila, 27000, Mexico.

Institutions of the Northwest Mexican Mission

In the area of education, the mission oversees two kindergarten, three elementary, two secondary, and one preparatory school, with a combined total of 340 students. All the schools are authorized and recognized by the Secretariat of Education of their respective states.

The Juan Escutia School located on 117 Tlahuacas Street, Santa María Colony, Torreón, Coahuila offers preschool, elementary, and secondary levels. Currently it has 96 students and an administrative and teaching staff of 13.

The Río Grande School located on Lerdo de Tejada Street, Vicente Guerrero Colony in Río Grande, Zacatecas offers the following levels: preschool, elementary, secondary and preparatory. It currently has 213 students and an administrative and teaching staff of 17.

The Niños Héroes School offers elementary education and has 40 students and three employees. It is located on Constitución Street, Progreso Colony, in Progreso, Zacatecas.⁵

Origins of the Adventist Work in the Territory of the Mission

The City of Durango

Although the name of the missionary is not known, the Adventist message first came to the small town of Luis Moya in 1914. It is accepted that the message reached the city of Durango around 1925, as it is known that in 1930, there was already an organized group of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the city of Durango, Durango.

In 1933 and 1934, Consuelo Zariñana, wife of Cesáreo González, was one of the pioneers in giving Bible studies in the city of Durango. Consuelo went to live for a time in the city of Gómez Palacio and there learned the Adventist message. She returned to the city of Durango and began to attend a small already established group

in the city. The church was located on Gómez Palacio Street, between Patóni and Pasteur Streets. Benito González Reza, his wife Martina Segovia Martínez and their children - Roberto, María Luisa and Josefina - heard the gospel from Consuelo Zariñana. Some time passed and there was a great deal of resistance before Martina made her decision for Christ. The secret of her acceptance of the gospel message was that she consulted a Bible, which had belonged to a deceased priest. This priest was a cousin of her husband, and the Bible had been kept at their house together with some of his other Catholic liturgical possessions. Through that Bible, Martina validated all that Consuelo had taught, and so accepted it. In 1935, her daughters accepted the gospel of Christ. The church changed addresses several times due to its growth, but in 1947, it was located on Gómez Palacio Street between Hidalgo and Zaragoza streets. During this period, the church grew to an active membership of 200. One reason for this rapid growth was that the members were faithful, missionary minded, and warmhearted. In 1952, the membership purchased a property on 1112 W Cinco de Febrero Street, the place where the current Durango church is still located.⁶

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Lagunera area (which includes Lerdo and Gómez Palacio, Durango) officially started in 1930. This fact was mentioned by missionary leaders Parsons and Parfitt, who sent Pastor Antonio E. Torres to Gómez Palacio, Durango. He moved to this city that same year, 1930, because there was already a small group of believers there. In 1948 the first church in Gómez Palacio, Durango was dedicated.⁷

State of Coahuila

The church in Torreón formally began on April 13, 1932 when Enriqueta Reséndiz de Cervantes heard the message through a colporteur named Mendieta. However, his brother Enrique Cervantes Esquivel, was the first in his family to accept the Adventist message. The group met in the center of Torreón on 180 North Hidalgo Street, in the house of the Torres family. Mr. Torres and his family started the first branch Sabbath School in the city of Torreón with his wife as leader, and his eight-year-old daughter as secretary.

In 1951, María Cortez Terrones donated a property to the Torreón Central Church; it was between Hidalgo and Juárez, and on the lower floor they created a clinic under the care of nurses Esther González and Esther Terrones. The Torreón Central Church started with seven families and a total of 74 members.⁸

State of Zacatecas

In 1938, in Tierra Blanca, Zacatecas, Saúl Lozano began to attend meetings with a small group of Adventists. He would go from Río Grande, Zacatecas to Tierra Blanca, which was about ten minutes away. As he could not read, he would ask his wife (who accompanied him to the studies) to read the Sabbath School lesson. On November 12, 1939, his sister Angela Mauricia was baptized before he was, in a place called San Felipe. In the beginning, the Adventist work grew in Río Grande, but even more so in Tierra Blanca, Zacatecas. The lay members of Tierra Blanca took the gospel to Progreso, Morones, and Nieves.⁹ Other churches were established, including the church in Independencia and then Fresnillo, where there are currently two districts: Central Fresnillo and South

Fresnillo.¹⁰

The Organization of the Mission

The desire and the necessity to better care for the membership led the North Mexican Union to hold a congress on August 25, 2009 where the following fields gathered in order to form the Northwest Region: The West Mexican Conference, the North Mexican Mission, and the Northeast Mexican Conference. The West Mexican Conference ceded the state of Zacatecas; the North Mexican Mission ceded the state of Durango, and the Northeast Mexican Conference gave the part of the state of Coahuila starting at the 102nd meridian.¹¹

On September 1, 2009, work was begun to organize the Northwest Mexican Region with the following districts: Torreón, Central Durango, Gómez Palacio, Fresnillo, Río Grande, Tierra Blanca, Nieves and Monte Escobedo. The official beginning of the field was in January 2010. Provisional offices were based at the Juan Escutia School in the city of Torreón, Coahuila. The personnel named by the North Mexican Union to take charge of this new field were: Field Secretary, Jaime Medrano Nieto, and as an assistant treasurer, Public Accountant Luis Ortega.¹²

Development of the Northwest Mexican Mission

The Adventist church has been growing in all its aspects, especially in missionary and financial areas. This growth resulted in the creation of two new districts, as well as in the development and expansion of the work of the church in the states of Durango and Zacatecas.

After a time of probation, on November 10, 2015, the North Mexican Union Conference took a vote to request the division to change the name of the region to Northwest Mexican Mission. On July 4, 2016, the Northwest Mexican Mission was organized with Pastor Rafael Torres González named as president.¹³ It began with 43 organized churches, 46 organized Sabbath schools and a membership of 12,072. There were five ordained ministers, nine licensed ministers and two with missionary credentials.¹⁴ Currently it has two additional districts: Durango Llanos and South Fresnillo.

Of the 132 counties that comprise the field of the Northwest Mexican Mission, there are 31 with an Adventist presence, thus leaving to reach, 34 counties in Durango, 41 in Zacatecas and seven in Northeast Coahuila.

In the counties of the state of Durango, with a population of approximately 1.7 million there are three districts, two in the city of Durango and one in the city of Gómez Palacio. In Durango there are 15 organized churches and 11 organized Sabbath schools and in Gómez Palacio there are seven organized churches and five Sabbath schools.

In the counties of Zacatecas, with a population of about 1.6 million, the Adventist church has seven districts in which there are 28 organized churches and 28 organized Sabbath schools.

In the counties of the state of Coahuila, in the Northeast Zone and the North Guadalajara Zone with a population of just over a million, there are two organized churches and one organized Sabbath school. It should be noted that there are three counties of the North Zone of the state of Jalisco which belong to the Northwest Mexican Mission. In the counties of Coahuila which include Torreón, Parras, and Matamoros, with a population of about one million, there are four organized churches and three organized Sabbath schools.

Fulfilling Its Mission

The Northwest Mexican Mission has set itself four challenges for the next few years, beginning in 2018!⁵

1. Evangelism in the three main cities of the Northwest Mexican Mission. In Zacatecas, the capital of the state of Zacatecas, to establish the Lucas Project for the upper middle class; in Torreón, an industrial zone in the state of Coahuila, to create “I Want to Live Healthy” centers, and in Durango, capital of the state of Durango, to care for the necessities of its people.

2. The Lucas Project. This project develops “health clubs” in areas where the church wants to establish a presence. The plan is administered by health professionals in the church and lay members who are trained to be promoters of good health.

3. There are three emphases adopted within the strategic plan of the Northwest Mexican Mission

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1) Total Member Involvement (initiated by the world church); 2) a faithful and missionary generation, where the emphasis is on training children as missionaries, and involving young people and general members who are committed to this mission; 3) a friendly and caring church, which has as its goal to be more empathetic to those around, helping them to better their lives and to be thankful.

4. Enabling new members in the faith, which has as its goal to teach the newly baptized to become missionary volunteers.

List of Presidents

Jaime Medrano Nieto (2010-2013); Rafael Torres González (2013-).

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NOTES

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