



Eastern Dnieper Conference (EDC/UUC) Headquarters

Photo courtesy of Eastern Dnieper Conference.

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# Eastern Dnieper Conference

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Sergey B. Molchanov, B.A. in theology ((Zaoksky Theological Seminary, Zaoksky, Tula Region, Russia), served as a pastor in cities Kharkov, Berdyansk, Zaporozhe, and Dnepropetrovsk. In 2000 he was elected as Sabbath School/Personal Ministries director, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries director, and member of the Eastern Dnieper Conference Executive Committee. From 2012 to 2019, Molchanov was serving as president of the Eastern Dnieper Conference/UUC. He coauthored the book *How it was in the days of Noah* with A. A. Oparin. He wrote articles for the journal *Global Affairs Review* and participated in preparing a *Field School Manual*.

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The Eastern Dnieper Conference is a church unit in eastern Ukraine that has operated since 1997.

## Territory and Statistics<sup>1</sup>

Period: 1997-present

Territory: Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkov, and Zaporizhia regions

Population: 7,673,885

Membership: 6,833

Churches: 109

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

During the time of Imperial Russia, the territory now covered by the Eastern Dnieper Conference belonged to the Kharkov, Taurida, and Yekaterinoslav governorates. Adventist missionary work in the Russian Empire started in Ukraine in the late 19th century. The work prospered and the Russian Mission was subdivided into numerous church units. When the Iron Curtain fell across the continent, information about the Church in the USSR ceased in the *SDA Yearbook* between 1931 and 1981. The last known church units to have covered the territory of the present Eastern Dnieper Conference (EDC) were the Azov Conference and the Lower Dnieper Mission. For the commencement of Adventist work in the territory, see the articles on those church units and their predecessors.

## Organizational History

The Eastern Dnieper Conference was organized in 1996 when the Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, and Zaporizhia regions were cut off from the Eastern Ukrainian Conference. The remaining territory of the Eastern Ukrainian Conference was the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The headquarters of the new Eastern Dnieper Conference was at Artioma Street 9/11, apartment 4, Kharkiv. Membership was 8,664. Initial officers were S. S. Drozd (president), V. A. Bliznenko (secretary), N. G. Zinyuk (treasurer), V. I. Begas, E. V. Kampen, I. V. Kampen, M. I. Mikityuk, A. V. Nikityuk, and V. N. Trusyyuk.<sup>2</sup>

The year 1997 was marked by a new wave of evangelistic events in which Pastors Drozd, Bliznenko, Zinyuk, James Gilley, Shevtsov, Begas, Buryachok, Isakov, Molchanov, and others actively participated.

In 1999 the delegates to the second constituency meeting of the conference elected new officers: Alexander I. Antonyuk (president), Anatoliy N. Nikityuk (secretary), and Yuriy P. Shevtsov (treasurer). Church growth in the conference continued due to evangelistic programs regularly conducted by foreign and local pastors. In the early 2000s, the conference was actively involved in implementing the *300?300?300 Program* initiated by the Euro-Asia Division and aimed at purchasing 300 prayer houses, planting 300 new congregations, and training

300 young pastors. All those efforts resulted in the growth of church membership in the conference. The conference headquarters was transferred to the city of Dnepropetrovsk, and it was decided to attach the Krivoy Rog district to the conference. Beginning in 2000, the headquarters has been at Narymskaya Street 46, Dnipropetrovsk.<sup>3</sup>

Membership increased for a couple of years after organization, so it was more than 11,000 in 1999. Despite a few occasional years of increase, the trend has been downwards ever since.<sup>4</sup>

In 2002 the third constituency meeting of the EDC elected Yuriy P. Shevtsov (president), Stepan A. Kampen (secretary), and Pavel A. Baydala (treasurer). In those years a wide range of evangelistic programs was conducted by evangelist John Carter in Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk, and Zaporozhe. As a result, more than 1,000 people were baptized and joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In 2005 the fourth constituency meeting of the EDC was held. The delegates elected Aleksey V. Isakov (president), Stepan A. Kampen (secretary), and Anatoliy A. Gospodarets (treasurer). The conference was comprised of more than 100 churches and 60 companies with some 10,000 members.

The fifth constituency meeting of the EDC (2008) reelected the same officers and adopted the four-year period between constituency meetings.

In 2012, the delegates to the sixth constituency meeting of the EDC elected Sergey B. Molchanov (president), Alexander L. Slyusarskiy (secretary), and Anatoliy A. Gospodarets (treasurer). Unfortunately, despite continued evangelistic efforts, church growth stopped and declining trends emerged. The reasons seemed to be loss of interest in the gospel message among many people in Ukraine and refocusing of the world Church's efforts on the ministry in Moslem and Asian countries.

The revolutionary events in Ukraine in 2014 triggered military activities in the territory of the neighboring Eastern Ukrainian Conference. Mass induction into military service, devaluation of the national currency, and impoverishment of people resulted in the trends for the decrease in church membership. Nevertheless, there were some positive facts such as the purchase of a complex of buildings in an environmentally pristine area of the Dnepropetrovsk region to accommodate a health complex, *Garmoniya*, as well as opening of four Adventist schools and four nursery education centers.

In 2016 the seventh constituency meeting of the EDC was held. The delegates elected Sergey B. Molchanov (president), Alexander N. Meleryakov (secretary), and Alexander L. Slyusarskiy (treasurer). At present, the Eastern Dnieper Conference is comprised of 110 churches and 68 companies with some 7,000 members. The conference is currently focusing on evangelistic ministry to children, teens, and young people.

## List of Presidents

Donetsk District senior pastor: Unknown (1978-1981); N. F. Trusuk (1982-1987).

Kharkov District senior pastor: Unknown (1978-1981); P. G. Titkov (1982-1984).

Odessa District senior pastor: Unknown (1967-1981); G. G. Galan (1982-1987).

Eastern Ukrainian District president: N. G. Trusuk (1987-1988); V. S. Neikurs (1989).

Eastern Ukrainian Conference president: V. S. Neikurs (1990-1992); I. F. Khiminets, (1993-1995); unknown (1996).

Eastern Dnieper Conference president: S. S. Drozd (1997-1999); Alexander I. Antonyuk (2000-2002); Yury P. Shevtsov (2003-2005); Alexey V. Isakov (2006-2012); Sergey B. Molchanov (2013-present).

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## SOURCES

"Annual Charts and Statistics" for "Eastern Dnieper Conference (1996-present)." Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research. Accessed July 2, 2019. [http://adventiststatistics.org/view\\_Summary.asp?FieldID=C12007](http://adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldID=C12007).

*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. Various years. <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

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## NOTES

1. For territory and statistics (excluding period), see "Eastern Dnieper Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2018), 79.
2. For territory and statistics on the division of the conference, see "Eastern Ukrainian Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, (1996), 153; "Eastern Dnieper Conference" and "Eastern Ukrainian Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, (1997), 114.
3. "Eastern Dnieper Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, (2000), 118.
4. For membership numbers through the years, see "Annual Charts and Statistics" for "Eastern Dnieper Conference (1996–Present)," Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, accessed on July 2, 2019, [http://adventiststatistics.org/view\\_Summary.asp?FieldID=C12007](http://adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldID=C12007).

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