Central Nicaragua Mission

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Central Nicaragua Mission includes the departments of Carazo, Granada, Managua, Masaya, and Rivas. It has a population of 3,127,654 inhabitants. Nicaragua Mission was organized in 1928 and reorganized in 2003 as Central...
Nicaragua Mission with 105 churches, 13,055 members, 21 pastors, and offices in Residential Villa Fontana in Managua.

**Institutions**

**Schools**


**Colleges**

Three of these institutions are operational in Managua. The first is *Colegio Vocacional Adventista de Nicaragua* (COVANIC), a boarding which was established in 1982 and is 12 kilometers west of the capital city. Second is *Colegio Reparto Schick* established in 1998. Third is *Colegio Metropolitano* established in 2001.

**Radio and TV Stations**

Thanks to the entrepreneurial vision of a group of brethren, including Leandro Delgado, David Murillo, Ismael Aguirre, and Mario Salas, the Seventh-day Adventist Church acquired a radio frequency, *Radio Adventista de Nicaragua* (“Advent Stereo”) on 92.7 FM, in Managua on May 14, 1997, covering over 60% of the country.

**Origins of Adventist Church in Nicaragua**

The Adventist faith was introduced to Nicaragua in 1898 with the work of spreading publications in the Nicaraguan Caribbean and with the ministry of Pastor Fránk Hutchins. From that initial work, a chain of English- and Mischito-speaking churches was planted. In 1926, Pastor Ellis Peter Howard and his wife, Perla Wagoner, began missionary work in Managua. A year later, the first Adventists, Zoila Castro de Soto and Antonio Guzmán, were baptized. With this missionary effort, Bóer Church was planted in the country’s capital. Given the growth of the church in the country, in 1928, Nicaragua Mission was officially organized. Pastor C. P. Kregger conducted an evangelistic campaign in 1933 by baptizing a large group of souls, including Rubén Ruiz, who later studied theology at the Spanish-American Adventist academy in Costa Rica and became the first Nicaraguan Adventist pastor. Also in 1933, a small Adventist school was established in Bóer with Professor Julia Rodríguez as an administrator.

Pastor Ellis Peter Howard’s work contributed to planting a church in Diriamba in 1931. Pastor Howard’s evangelistic ministry led to the conversion of Luis Antonio Rocha, who later became a pastor in the Adventist church in Nicaragua. In 1936, Adventism arrived in Jinotepe, Nicaragua, with Indalecio Vásquez, Cipriano Estrada, Gregoria Roy, and Natán Sevilla as its first members.

In 1938, there was only one church organized in El Bóer and two groups in the south of Nicaragua, specifically in Diriamba and Jinotepe. The country, including the Caribbean area, had only 177 members, 275 Sabbath School members, and an elementary school with 120 students supervised by a missionary couple. In 1952, there were 400 members; in 1955, there were 800 members; and, between 1960-1966, the number of members rose from 980 to 1,834.

In 1956, two members of the Bóer church, Adam Abarca and Salvador Arriaga, preached in the community of Las Maderas in Municipio Tipitapa. In 1957, Asthor Downs, grandson of Augustos Lucy Downs, one of the first Adventists in the Corn Islands of Caribbean Nicaragua, shared his Adventist beliefs with Adilia and Maria Roblero while visiting the city of Granada. This led to planting new churches throughout the department. Also in 1957, brethren from the Bóer church, including Hope Noble, Antonio Selva, Salvador Kavistan, and Adam Abarca, built a church in the eastern areas of Managua. In 1958, under the direction of Pastor Luis Antonio Rocha, that same group built a church in El Paraisito, which, after an earthquake in 1972, became the main church.

In 1967, Pastor Roberto Elden Ford requested legal status from the senate. This was accepted under legislative decree number 1405 on November 24, 1967, and published in the "Gazette" on February 12, 1968.

In 1966, there were only two churches in Managua – El Bóer and El Paraisito. The families of Julia Torrez, Gabriel Molina, Dulce Vindel, and Luis and María de la Cruz Montiel established a branch sabbatical school in Colonia San Judas and the first church in the sector, eventually leading to establishing a series of churches in the southwest of Managua. In December 1972, an earthquake in Managua destroyed the Bóer church, and the need to establish new churches in Managua, especially in Santa Rosa, Monsignor Lezcano, Reparto Schick, and La Fuente, was seen. From the beginning of 1973, the Nicaragua Mission offices were temporarily relocated to the city of Jinotepe under the administration of Pastor Winston Cunningham.
At the end of 1973, Pastor Edgar Mendoza and a group of laymen from the Granada church started a new church in Masaya, “the cradle of national folklore,” extending Adventism to Nindirí, Niquinohomo, and Monimbó.\(^\text{11}\)

In 1975, Mr. and Mrs. Alejandro and Emilia Mejía visited the city of Rivas on Mexico’s southern border, got people interested in “The Voice of Hope,” and then proceeded with Bible studies. With the effort of Colporteurs Edgar Sandoval and Humberto Martínez, the Mejías started the church of Rivas that led to new congregations. In 1978, Nicaragua had 7,018 Adventist members.\(^\text{12}\)

Near the start of the Nicaraguan Revolution in 1980, 9,250 Adventist members gathered in 30 Nicaraguan churches. In August 1981, the political climate was stressed, creating distance between the government and the Catholic and Evangelical churches. During this, the Seventh-day Adventist Church suffered the loss of 12 of its churches. Although the churches were returned weeks later, the Seventh-day Adventist Church lost the Adventist Hospital of Nicaragua in La Trinidad, Estelí, and it lost the Adventist campground in Laguna de Masaya.\(^\text{13}\)

**Formative Events: Organization of Central Nicaragua Mission**

In the 1980s, laymen and pastors’ efforts led to creating new and emblematic congregations in Managua, Granada, and Masatepe, and dozens of new churches throughout Nicaragua. After the Nicaraguan Revolution ended in 1990, Nicaragua had 29,172 Adventist members in 1992 and, in 1996, 38,063 members, 87 churches, and 134 groups. Between 2004-2006, 24 new churches were organized in the capital under the administration of Pastor Wilfredo Ruiz. This all resulted from the “The Church That is in Your House” program and the work of pastors, Gerald Margil, Salomón Espinoza, Bosco Vanegas, and Juan Ángel Quevara.\(^\text{14}\)

In 1997, Nicaragua Adventist Radio was established. In 2003, the government authorized the opening of *Universidad Adventista de Nicaragua*, which, from 2019, became an official extension of *Universidad Adventista de Centro América*.

The different ministries have been important in transmitting Adventist values and in preaching the gospel in Nicaragua.

**Church and Community**

The radio program, *La Voz de la Esperanza*, and the radio-postal school have graduated many people in the Nicaraguan community since the 1970s. The ministry of the printed page and the distribution of the missionary magazines, *El Centinela* and “Priorities,” have been a great blessing. The work of Adventist elementary and secondary education have also proven very beneficial to the community. The work of OFASA (*Obra Filantrópica de Asistencia Social Adventista*) provided assistance during the 1972 earthquake and the Nicaraguan Revolution in 1979. ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) also provided relief during Hurricane Joan in 1988, the eruption of Cerro Negro in 1991, the tsunami on the Pacific coast in 1992, the floods to the west and south of the country in 1996, and after Hurricane Mitch in 1998.

ADRA helped in the distribution of food and clothing. In 2008 and 2009, ADRA made a significant contribution to the Ministry of Education with the donation of 300 libraries for secondary schools and institutions and donations of six public libraries to the government of Managua for special education centers. Literacy programs sponsored by “Hope for Humanity” have also been significant; thousands of people in Managua and districts in the south of Nicaragua have been taught to read and write.\(^\text{15}\)

**Organization of Central Nicaragua Mission**

The church work in Nicaragua grew and developed under the administration of those committed to evangelistic and pastoral ministry. During 1928-2003, 16 presidents laid foundations for administrative development of the work in Nicaragua. In 2010, Nicaragua Mission was reorganized to form Northwestern Nicaragua Mission, and Nicaragua Mission was renamed Central Nicaragua Mission. In 2014, South Atlantic Nicaragua Mission was organized from Central Nicaragua Mission.

**Mission Plans to Fulfill Mission**

Seventh-day Adventists in Central Nicaragua Mission are challenged by establishing churches in each municipality of the countryside, constructing new temples, converting groups into organized churches, strengthening educational institutions, continuing teacher-training programs, remodeling of COVANIC (*Colegio Vocacional Adventista de Nicaragua*) and other educational centers’ infrastructure, strengthening the finances of the countryside, increasing the number of pastors, and changing the status of Central Nicaragua Mission into a conference.

It needs to create a greater Adventist presence among Nicaragua’s upper middle class, to establish centers of influence, and to modernize the Adventist radio station.
List of Presidents

SOURCES
Central Nicaragua Mission. Reports and meeting minutes. Secretariat archives.


Other Sources


Inter-American Division membership statistical report. 2003.


NOTES
2. Central Nicaragua Mission, 2019, education department archives.
5. Florence Watson de Moraga, interview by author, June 2012, Masaya, Nicaragua.
6. Ibid.


14. Ibid., 141.

15. Ibid., 140-148.
