

# South Bogota Conference

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The South Bogota Conference is part of the territory of the Inter-American Division.

The South Bogota Conference's headquarters is located in the city of Bogotá, capital of the Republic of Colombia. The territory of the Conference covers a population of 3,979,896. It comprises the south-easterly part of Bogotá and the municipalities of Soacha, Sibate, Granada, Chipaque, Une, Caqueza, Fosca, Quetame and Gutiérrez. It is comprised of 71 churches, where 16,805 members<sup>1</sup> gather under the care of 13 ordained pastors and 2 licensed pastors. The offices are located in Bogotá on Carrera 24 s 47-04 second floor, Palermo community.

Emmanuel Adventist College is the institution in the South Bogota Conference. It is located at 10b South Street 18- 25, Luna Park community. This institution began its work as a church school in 1940 until 1973<sup>2</sup> From 1974, it became a conference school; it changed its name to Emmanuel Adventist College in 1991. Currently, the school offers primary and secondary education, from preschool to grade 11, and has an enrollment of 444 students.<sup>3</sup>

## Origins of the Seventh-day Adventist Work in the territory of the South Bogota Conference, Colombia, of the South Colombian Union

In the late 1890s, a self-supporting missionary Frank C. Kelly arrived in Colombia determined to share Adventism in Colombia. He was only able to stay in the country for three years because his wife became ill and he had to



South Bogota Conference headquarters.

Photo courtesy of Dumarly Andrea G. Florez.

return to his country. His job was to sell photographic equipment and teach English. Unfortunately, "after two decades, there was no one to continue Kelly's pioneering work", and he could not develop and bear fruit for the seed he had sown.<sup>4</sup> That was the first attempt to preach the Advent message in Colombia. But it was not until 1913 that missionary B. E. Connerly volunteered to try to break the "proverbial ice of Colombia" through publications. In 1915, he and his family settled in Barranquilla, and then in Medellin the following year. There he wrote: "This is the most delightful and hardest field I've ever worked in."<sup>5</sup> G. A. Schwerin took the work that Connerly had left uncompleted in 1917, but for that time E. M. Trummer visited Colombia for the first time. Less than two years later, when he moved to Bogota, he put into motion his expertise in distributing Adventist books as a canvasser in order to prepare Colombia for active evangelism. It was during his years of service that the Adventist work in Colombia had its true beginning.<sup>6</sup>

In 1921, Dr. Max Trummer arrived in Bogota to strengthen the missionary work that had already begun in the past and contacted the Kelley and Cleves families to pay for efforts in preaching the gospel in the country's capital, and lease a place in Carrera 9 and Street 14 in the city center. On July 30, 1921, Dr. Trummer met to organize the first congregation in the city of Bogota, after paying lease for about 12 years, the members of this congregation with aid from the Inter-American Division, bought a building on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue 18-13, Luna Park, south of the city, where they congregated for more than 11 years.

The good missionary work and faithfulness of the brethren led to this group of men buying a property in the center of the city, where they established themselves as a church in 1944, while the Luna Park building functioned as offices. In the meantime, the Inter-American Division authorized the sale of the property and this matter was left God's hands.<sup>7</sup>

In 1950, the Central Church of Bogotá began to hold a branch Sabbath School in the old building for five years but due to the growth of the city in that there, they found it important to restore Adventist presence in the Luna Park area. As a result of the missionary effort on May 31, 1955, the vote was taken to organize as a group which today corresponds to the Seventh-day Adventist church in Luna Park.<sup>8</sup>

The church continued this missionary work and in 1955, under the leadership of Pastor Griswell, the first eight baptisms were performed: Leopoldo Aranguren, José Gutiérrez, Emma de Mateos,

Milton Parada, Lucía Sánchez, Blanca Argenis Medina, Leonor Gutierrez and Atenaez Aragon.<sup>9</sup>

Thus Luna Park in the 1950s became one of the most representative churches that provided missionary support by sending lay people to different areas in the south of the capital, and establishing new congregations that began in the auditorium of the Emmanuel College, which had been in operation since 1941.

On the other hand, in 1973, a group of members from Luna Park decided to meet in an area that was closer in proximity to them and thus the Maranatha congregation was established, in the Meissen community, south of the city.<sup>10</sup> The message was also expanded to the municipalities of Bosa and Usme which today form part of the

city of Bogotá,<sup>11</sup> and thus the Gospel began to spread in several places of the territory, in what is known today as the territory of this Conference.

## Events that Led to the Organization of the South Bogota Conference

The Colombia Mission was organized in 1922,<sup>12</sup> and its first president was Pastor E. M. Trummer. The address of the Mission's office was: Section 599, Bogota, Republic of Colombia. The members of the Executive Board were: Chairman, M. E. Trummer, L. V. Cleaves, Fred Brower, F. C. Kelley and Antonio Redondo.<sup>13</sup> In 1926, the Mission was reorganized into four missions: the Medellin-based Antioqueña Mission whose president was Mr. Max Trummer, the Atlantic Mission based in Barranquilla, the Cali-based Pacific Mission and the Bogota-based Central Mission, whose president was Pastor. G.C. Nickle. The territory of the Central Mission served the provinces of Cundinamarca, Tolima, Huila, Caquetá, Boyacá, Santander, Norte de Santander, Arauca, Vichada, Vaupés and Meta.<sup>14</sup>

In 1927, the provinces of North Santander and Santander were assigned to the Antioqueña Mission and the territory comprising the Pacific Mission (the provinces of Chocó, Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Nariño and Putumayo) were assigned to the Central Mission, which changed its headquarters from the city of Bogotá to the city of Cali.<sup>15</sup>

In 1929, the territory of the Central Mission was divided and was assigned to the provinces of Arauca, Boyacá, Cundinamarca, Huila, Meta, Tolima and Vichada, and saw the rebirth of the mission in the Pacific, with the territories of Chocó, Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Nariño and Putumayo.<sup>16</sup> In 1930, the Antioqueña Mission changed its name, and is now known as the Central Mission, and while the territory administered by the Central Mission was called the Upper Magdalena Mission. The new Mission was led by N. H. Kinzer.<sup>17</sup> In 1938, the northern part of Caquetá and the province of Vaupés and Amazonas were joined to it.<sup>18</sup> In 1939, the Caquetá and Amazonas territories were transferred to the Pacific Mission.<sup>19</sup>

In 1941 the territory was reorganized and assigned the departments of Santander del Norte, Santander del Sur, Caquetá and Amazonas; the Central Mission was dissolved, leaving only three Missions in Colombia.<sup>20</sup> Vote 1,346 of the union board taken on January 17, 1941 says: "Recommended to the Inter-American Division the reorganization of the missions in Colombia." The territory now covered by four Missions was requested to be reorganized into three missions. The territory consists of "the Upper Magdalena Mission, the Atlantic Colombian Mission and Pacific Colombian".<sup>21</sup>

In 1985 the conference ceded the territories of Arauca, Guainia, Norte de Santander, Santander, the northeast section of Boyaca and east section of Casanare and Vichada, to create a new field. It then remained with the territories of Amazonas, Boyaca, Caqueta, Casanare, Cundinamarca, Huila, Meta, Putumayo, Tolima, and Vaupes.<sup>22</sup> In 2006, the territories of Caqueta, Huila, and Tolima; and portions of Boyaca, Caldas and Cundinamarca were ceded to the Conference to form the South Colombian Mission.<sup>23</sup> In 2009, the Boyaca's

(except the northeast section), Casanare (except east section), Guainia, Guaviare, Meta, and Vaupes were ceded to form the Llanos and Boyacá Mission.<sup>24</sup>

In 2010, the Upper Magdalena Conference ceded the territories of the south-east of Bogotá and a portion of Cundinamarca,<sup>25</sup> and it is in this separation that we find the birth of the South Bogotá Region. The decision was taken at the South Colombian Union Executive Committee held in Bogotá D.C., from November 16-18, 2010, and Pr. Germán Darío Pérez was appointed as coordinator.<sup>26</sup> It was comprised of 50 churches distributed in nine districts: Redemption, Luna Park, Bello Horizonte, Emmanuel, Betania, Bosa-II, Soacha, Lucero and Israel!<sup>27</sup> Pastor Jaime Rivero was appointed as coordinator of the South Region,<sup>28</sup> and five months later, on May 25, 2011, Pastor Yerko Samuel Viana Moreno was appointed as secretary.<sup>29</sup> Later, in a meeting of the South Colombian Executive Committee,<sup>30</sup> a change of status, from region to mission was voted on the recommendation of the Inter-American Division. On February 11, 2013, Pastor Jaime Rivero was appointed as president, Pastor Yerko Samuel Viana Moreno as secretary and Oscar Amado as treasurer of the newly formed mission.<sup>31</sup> On September 30, 2013, Pastor Germán Pérez, replaced Pastor Jaime Rivero.<sup>32</sup> On November 3, 2014, the South Mission changed status from mission to conference, and Pastor Leonel Preciado was appointed as president, as Pastor Nelson Gamboa as secretary, and Brother Fredy Ramirez as treasurer.<sup>33</sup>

## The South Bogota Conference's Mission

Based on the pillars of Community, Relationship and Mission, the following initiatives have been implemented:

Working towards the consecrating of our church members, presenting as an example the revival and reform in the pastoral body in the leaders and finally in the members, inspiring them to live a real experience with God, promoting their personal devotion, family worship, fidelity, and healthy habits.

Another initiative that was implemented is that of quality care. It has to do with pastoral visitation, the care of the members, the church programs, which helps us to meet the needs of and care for the well-being of the church.

Training that helps to educate, inspire, instruct and guide brethren in all areas of Christian life, especially in the area of evangelism, promoting the initiative of "Total Membership Involvement," preparing church members to be of service in the community and with mission-oriented skills.

Finally, to inform the church members about what is being done in the church, how resources are used, and make non-Adventists aware of what Adventists believe, establishing community service programs, social impact programs, and centers of where the community finds timely help and sees the church as a place where they can get help in their time of need.<sup>35</sup>

The South Bogota Conference is fulfilling the mission through community service, witnessing projects, the printed page, in the establishment of new congregations, membership training in the mission of the church, extending to places where there is no Adventist presence, as well through Adventist education and medical centers.

## List of Presidents.

Jaime Rivero (2013); German Dario Pérez (2013-2014); Leonel Preciado (2014-2018); Juan Emerson Hernandez (2018-present).

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### NOTES

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