



Current North Argentine Conference headquarters.

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# North Argentine Conference

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North Argentine Conference (Asociación Argentina del Norte, or AAN) is an administrative unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, located in the territory of the Argentina Union Conference (Unión Argentina, or UA). Its headquarters is on México Street, 830, Zip Code W3402DTR, Yapeyú neighborhood, city of Corrientes, province of Corrientes, Republic of Argentina.<sup>1</sup>

## Territory and Statistics

The territory of this administrative unit of the Church comprises the geographical area of the provinces of Chaco, Corrientes, Formosa, and Misiones, as well as the northern territory of Santa Fe. In this entire region

there is a population of 5,271,345.<sup>2</sup> The number of Adventist members in that area is 26,043, and there are an additional 4,300 who are interested in learning more about the Adventist message. The AAN mission field is organized into 37 pastoral districts, where there are 258 congregations, with 130 organized churches and 128 groups. The ratio is one Adventist member per 202 people.<sup>3</sup>

AAN manages 25 institutions of the Adventist Education Network, serving around 8,804 school-aged children and teenagers. Of these 25 institutions, 14 are high schools and 11 are primary schools.<sup>4</sup> Although they offer different levels of education, the objective of all is the same: “to promote the integral development of students to form autonomous citizens, committed to the well-being of the community, to the country and to God.”<sup>5</sup>

In the province of Chaco, the high schools are as follows: Loma Linda Adventist Academy, located at Los Ceibos, 1801, Loma Linda neighborhood, in Roque Sáenz Peña, with 394 students;<sup>6</sup> Resistencia Adventist Academy, located at Rivadavia, 660, Resistencia, with 813 students;<sup>7</sup> and Villa Angela Adventist Academy, located at Hungría, 70, Villa Angela, with 358 students.<sup>8</sup> In the province of Corrientes, the institutions are as follows:<sup>9</sup> Bella Vista Adventist Academy, located at La Rioja, 198, Downtown, Bella Vista, with 304 students;<sup>10</sup> and Corrientes Adventist Academy, located at Resoagli, 1204, Villa Celia, Corrientes Capital, with 448 students.<sup>11</sup> In the province of Formosa are the following institutions: El Colorado Adventist Academy, located at Córdoba, 664, April 2, El Colorado, with 239 students;<sup>12</sup> and Formosa Adventist Academy, located at Juan José Silva, 2620, Formosa Capital, with 1,003 students.<sup>13</sup>

In the province of Misiones are located: Alta Gracia Adventist Academy at Santa Catalina, 4900, Posadas, with 641 students;<sup>14</sup> Juan Bautista Alberdi Adventist Academy, at Russia Avenue, 410, Villa Libertad, L.N. Alem (in relation to Misiones Adventist College), with 654 students;<sup>15</sup> Comandante Andresito Adventist Academy, at Mexico n/n, Comandante Andresito, with 196 students;<sup>16</sup> Mariano Moreno Adventist Academy, at Jujuy, 2288, Posadas, with 646 students;<sup>17</sup> Montecarlo Adventist Academy, at Paraguay Avenue, 2490, Montecarlo, with 329 students;<sup>18</sup> Puerto Esperanza Adventist School, located at Entre Ríos and Mendoza, Puerto Esperanza, with 311 students;<sup>19</sup> and Puerto Iguazu Adventist Academy, located at Peñaloza and J. I. Rucci, Barrio Belén, Puerto Iguazú, with 766 students.<sup>20</sup>

The primary schools in the province of Misiones are: Aristóbulo del Valle Adventist School, at National Route 14, Kilometer 1210, Aristóbulo del Valle, with 180 students;<sup>21</sup> Bello Horizonte Adventist School, at Provincial Route 7, Kilometer 18, Jardín América, with 73 students;<sup>22</sup> the Campo Grande Adventist School, at Francisco Vanoni and Montecarlo, Campo Grande, with 232 students;<sup>23</sup> Eldorado Adventist School, located at Salto Dos Hermanas Kilometer 6, Eldorado, with 168 students;<sup>24</sup> El Alcázar Adventist School, located at Colonia El Alcázar, with 94 students;<sup>25</sup> El Soberbio Adventist School, at Provincial Route 13, Kilometer 34, San Vicente, with 101 students;<sup>26</sup> Jardín América Adventist School, at Uruguay Avenue, 179, Centro, Jardín América, with 199 students;<sup>27</sup> Oberá Adventist School, at Colón 1370, Oberá, with 148 students;<sup>28</sup> Villa Oasis Adventist School, at Colonia Oasis, with 103 students;<sup>29</sup> Adventist School of Puerto Rico, at Bolivia and Mariano Moreno, 187, Puerto Rico, with 185

students,<sup>30</sup> and Wanda Adventist School, located at June 20 and April 2, Wanda, with 219 students.<sup>31</sup>

The 24 Radio Nuevo Tiempo (New Time Radio) stations in the AAN territory have preached the gospel through FM radio waves to an estimated audience of two million listeners.<sup>32</sup> The radio program is broadcast to the territories of Chaco, Corrientes, Misiones, and northern Santa Fe.<sup>33</sup> In addition, the Nuevo Tiempo (Adventist Media Center) television program can be watched through open channels existing in major cities in the missionary territory of this administrative unit.<sup>34</sup>

The North Argentine Conference takes the gospel to people throughout its vast territory through the work of 782 active employees. Among these, there are 34 pastors with ministerial credentials, 18 with ministerial licenses, three with missionary licenses, and seven with missionary credentials. The other employees work in administrative or educational functions.<sup>35</sup>

## The Origin of the Adventist Work in the Conference Territory

In 1901 the Adventist Church first became active in the region where the North Argentine Conference is currently located. At that time the territory was served by the South American Mission Union, now known as Argentina Union Conference, which comprised much of the South American continent. One of the first missionaries sent by the Church to act in this region was Pastor Frank Westphal, who organized the territory of South America and officially separated the Brazilian mission field from the other countries of the union.<sup>36</sup>

In one of his reports to the Church, Westphal said that, during September 1902, an elder from Brazil named Schwantes had been in Misiones and had gathered a group of 12 Sabbath keepers in Posadas, capital of the province of Misiones. He also reported that there was another group of eight people meeting in the town of San Juan, Misiones, and that they had also begun to keep the Sabbath.<sup>37</sup> Those who were in Posadas had accepted the Sabbath because of the testimony of an Adventist who had come from Chile on his escape from military service. The believers in Posadas had misconceptions about observance of the day of atonement and some other beliefs.<sup>38</sup>

Schwantes mentioned that those believers were interested in learning and that he should help them to give up their wrong ideas. River Plate Conference, now known as Central Argentine Conference, decided to send the missionaries Dr. Robert Habenicht (a doctor and pastor) and Pastor John McCarthy there. These men visited the area in May 1903 and met with the Posadas and Corpus groups.<sup>39</sup> In May 1904, Nelson Town traveled to the province of Santa Fe and reported on activities in the northern part of that province.<sup>40</sup> Towards the end of 1904, Dr. Habenicht accompanied Luis Ernst to Posadas, Misiones, and to other places to visit groups that were emerging. Pastor McCarthy reported that there were 80 people who had decided to be baptized that year, of whom 48 had already been baptized.<sup>41</sup>

Ernst, who was a member of the Argentine Conference Board of Directors, now known as Central Argentine Conference, continued to visit that territory for a period. After Misiones, he went to Empedrado, in the province of Corrientes. The task in that place was not easy. Ernst encountered a lot of opposition, with false accusations and prison threats and persecution by the police. However, there he met two families of ten adults who accepted the Adventist faith. Additional people met with these ten and promised to make a decision later. Thus, the Adventist work was established for the first time in that province.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the advances made, the Adventist work in that region needed an administrative reorganization to help direct evangelistic efforts. Time and resources needed to be invested in different regions, such as the province of Misiones, Argentina, and the Republic of Paraguay, which were places where the Adventists had already established some churches and meeting sites.<sup>43</sup>

## Conference Organizational History

In order to better serve the members and to advance the preaching of the Adventist message, on March 21, 1906, the mission territory in South America was reorganized. This was done in accordance with recommendation #7. made at the South American Union Mission's first congress held from March 15 to 24, 1906, in the city of Paraná, Entre Ríos province, Argentina.<sup>44</sup> On that occasion, the South American Union Mission was organized as Union Mission, independent of North America Missionary Board; and the South American territory was reorganized into seven missions and three conferences, one of which was the newly established Upper Parana Mission.<sup>45</sup>

At first the Upper Parana Mission comprised the Territorio Nacional de Misiones, Argentina, and the Republic of Paraguay. Luis Ernst was its first president and N. Z. Town was the first secretary-treasurer. Throughout the territory of the mission there were 100 baptized Adventists and three organized churches. During the years 1906 to 1909, the mission headquarters was first located in Buenos Aires and then in Encarnación, Itapuá, Paraguay.<sup>46</sup>

The first general meeting of this new mission was held in a store rented by the Argentine Conference, in Santa Ana, province of Misiones, from November 15 to 22, 1907. It was there decided to have meetings once each year.<sup>47</sup> By the end of 1907, there were five churches and 82 members in the territory. Membership continued to grow, and two years later there were six congregations and a total of 202 members in that region. In 1910 the headquarters was moved to Posadas, Argentina, and Julio Ernst became the president and G. E. Hartman became the secretary.<sup>48</sup>

The revolutions in Paraguay were almost continuous between 1910 and 1911, and they made the work of the missionaries difficult.<sup>49</sup> However, the Adventist message continued its expansion into northern Paraguay and Argentina. Lack of literacy in the population was a major problem in that region. Therefore, there was a strong desire to create educational institutions in the mission territory. Since then, many schools have been

established and now the province of Misiones has the largest number of educational institutions at all levels throughout Argentina.<sup>50</sup>

In February 1912, during a series of meetings of South American Union Conference held in Santiago, Chile, the territory of the Upper Parana Mission was reorganized. At that time the territory of the mission field was expanded, adding the provinces of Formosa, Chaco, and northern Corrientes (with a line drawn from the city of Sao Tome to Empedrados).<sup>51</sup> From 1913 to 1915, the territory of this mission included Chaco, Formosa, Misiones, northern Corrientes, and Paraguay. Then, in February 1916, the rest of the Corrientes province also became part of the Upper Parana Mission.<sup>52</sup>

During 1917 the Church considered initiating an evangelistic mission among the Guarani Indians. However, little was mentioned of this project until 1928 when the natives of the province of Formosa were added to the mission. Still, little was done as a result of the lack of sufficient funds for the missionary work.<sup>53</sup>

From February 24 to March 5, 1921, there was another reorganization of the Unión Austral (Austral Union Conference), now known as Argentina Union Conference.<sup>54</sup> The Upper Parana Mission continue to comprise Paraguay and the Argentine provinces of Misiones, Chaco, Formosa, and Corrientes.<sup>55</sup> Around 1926 the mission headquarters was relocated to San Martín, 1474, city of Corrientes, capital of the province of Corrientes, Argentina. From there the work in this mission field went forward under the direction of Pastor Ignacio Kalbermatter.<sup>56</sup>

In 1928 new churches and groups were established in the Upper Parana Mission field. On January 14 of that year, Pastor J. H. Roth baptized two people and organized a church with 23 members in Reconquista.<sup>57</sup> Also at that time, Pastor J. W. Westphal baptized 13 people and organized a church with 24 members in Charata, Chaco. Due to the expansion of the Church in that territory, a further reorganization of the mission field would soon be necessary.<sup>58</sup>

For 27 years this administrative unit was called the Upper Parana Mission, Beginning in 1934, the name was changed to Misión del Norte (North Mission) and it began to manage the work in the Argentine provinces of Los Andes, Jujuy, Salta, Tucumán, Santiago del Estero, Chaco, Formosa, Corrientes, and Misiones, including also the entire Paraguayan territory.<sup>59</sup> This change happened because the Austral Union Conference board decided to change the operation of Northwestern Argentine Mission. It was believed that the new configuration would better serve the membership. The first president of that administrative unit under the new name was Pastor W. A. Ernenputsch, and Hugo P. Beskow was the new secretary-treasurer.<sup>60</sup> The new headquarters of the mission was at Carlos Pellegrini, 1645, Corrientes, Argentina.<sup>61</sup>

In the following years this new territorial configuration benefited the Church as it spread the gospel in Argentina and Paraguay. From 1935 to 1945, the number of members grew from 817 to 1,196. In the same period the number of pastors exclusively involved ranged from four to eight for that entire mission field.<sup>62</sup> In 1945 the

North Mission headquarters was transferred to España Avenue 851, Corrientes, Argentina.<sup>63</sup>

Due to the Church's need to have an administrative unit in Paraguay, in December 1947 the Austral Union Conference voted that the North Mission should be reorganized and manage only the churches on Argentine soil. The name for the new organization was North Argentine Mission, and it was responsible for the work in the provinces of Corrientes, Jujuy, Salta, Tucumán, Santiago del Estero, Misiones, Chaco, and Formosa (all in northern Argentina).<sup>64</sup> The first president of the mission under this new name was Pedro M. Brouchy.<sup>65</sup>

The mission was always in need of more available workers to carry the message. There were many people, even in very remote locations, who were interested in learning about Adventism and were in need of doctors, Bible instructors, and teachers.<sup>66</sup> The leadership of the mission made great efforts to meet the needs. In 1952, during the North Argentine Mission Biennial Congress, it was said that "in the last two years more souls were baptized than ever before in the history of this field." At that time the mission had sufficient financial resources to continue preaching, since the members were being faithful in their tithes and offerings.<sup>67</sup>

In the early 1960s educational institutions were established in the capital cities of the provinces of Misiones, Tucumán, Salta, Corrientes, and Posadas. With the inauguration of these schools, the North Argentine Mission became responsible for 13 Adventist schools, of which eight were in the territory of Misiones. One of them (the most representative and the first school in that province) was Juan Bautista Alberdi Adventist Academy, now known as Misiones Adventist College, in Picada Rusa, now known as Villa Libertad.<sup>68</sup> The establishment of so many schools was an indication that the Adventist Church early recognized that Christian education created interest and strengthened evangelistic work among the people.<sup>69</sup>

In 1970 the territory of the North Argentine Mission was reconfigured when the province of Catamarca was added to the mission. There was also another headquarters move that year. This time it was transferred to Carlos Pellegrini, 747, Corrientes.<sup>70</sup> Six years after being established in Corrientes, on October 30, 1976, the mission organized a church in the city of Goya, Corrientes.<sup>71</sup> In 1985, after 15 years working in Carlos Pellegrini, the mission moved to a new headquarters in the same city, on the corner of Mexico and Granaderos Streets.<sup>72</sup>

In 1988 the mission territory was once again reorganized, giving rise to the new Northwest Argentine Mission, which was responsible for Adventist advancement in the provinces of Catamarca, Jujuy, Salta, Tucumán, and Santiago del Estero. It also started to manage the work of the Church in the provinces of Chaco, Corrientes, Formosa, and Misiones. The first president of the new mission was Pastor Eduardo G. Schmidt, and Marcelo B. Fucks was secretary-treasurer.<sup>73</sup>

On December 18, 1989, a new conference headquarters was inaugurated. Since then, the headquarters of this administrative unit has been located at Mexico, 830, Yapeyú neighborhood, Corrientes.<sup>74</sup> In 1990 the northern part of the Santa Fe province was added to the mission field of the North Argentine Conference, and this configuration of the North Argentine Conference remains today.<sup>75</sup>

On March 10, 1997, Formosa Adventist Academy inaugurated its new school building.<sup>76</sup> In the first decade of the new millennium the number of churches in this mission field increased from 134 in 2000 to 174 congregations in 2009. In the same period, the annual average number of baptisms in this local field was around 1,598. In just nine years, the Church in this region added 9,173 new members, which was the greatest growth rate in the history of this conference.<sup>77</sup>

Several AAN events should be highlighted. One is the district Revival and Evangelism Seminars for leaders, with short campaigns, programs in places where Global Mission<sup>78</sup> is operating, and evangelistic campaigns by satellite. Another is the preparation and qualification of church elders in the School of Evangelism, with the goal of perfecting the evangelism methods practiced by churches in the rural areas. In the area of communication, AAN has invested in radio and TV programs and the Nuevo Tiempo (Adventist Media Center), which now has 96 locations.<sup>79</sup>

In addition to this, the North Argentine Conference video-produced 25 Bible study lessons titled *La Nueva Fe de Jesús (The New Faith of Jesus)*,<sup>80</sup> as a missionary tool for Bible instructors. In order to make the church spaces more attractive and comfortable for visitors and members, from 2010 to 2015, 51 new churches were built in strategic locations in the cities of the territory. Also, AAN personal ministry leadership has worked with 617 small groups<sup>81</sup> and 1,260 missionary pairs,<sup>82</sup> promoting the preaching of the gospel.<sup>83</sup> For the care and evangelism of children and teenagers, this administrative unit promotes physical, mental, and spiritual activities in 76 Adventurer Clubs<sup>84</sup> and 85 Pathfinder Clubs throughout this mission field.<sup>85</sup>

From its inception, AAN has participated in the evangelistic programs developed by the Argentina Union Conference and the South American Division. One of these is the program *Impacto Esperanza (Hope Impact)*,<sup>86</sup> which has been held annually since 2007. Through this project, church leaders, employees, and members distribute evangelistic books free of charge to the population. In recognition of the blessing the books have been to thousands of people, in July 2019 Province of Misiones House of Representatives sent a letter to the AAN president, in which it recognized the Church for doing this important work.<sup>87</sup>

AAN's history shows the importance of leaders and members being committed to the mission of preaching the gospel. Since the establishment of this administrative unit, the dedicated effort made by men and women, under divine direction, has helped many people learn about the truths of the Bible and become disciples of Christ. Thus, the Church has grown in the northern region of Argentina. For the future, AAN leadership plans to promote communion, relationships, and mission, so that members and leaders can continue to be A Voice of Hope. The North Argentine Conference continues to communicate hope, exhorting and contributing to the preparation of people for the coming of Jesus.<sup>88</sup>

## Chronology of Administrative Leaders<sup>89</sup>

Presidents: Louis Ernst (1906-1909); Julius Ernst (1910-1915); Santiago Mangold (1916-1921); Otto Schnepfer (1921-1922); Ignacio Kalbermatter (1923-1926); Otto Schnepfer (1927-1928); W. A. Ernenputsch (1928-1935); Carl Becker (1936-1937); Niels Wensell (1937-1945); I. M. Vacquer (1945); Pedro M. Brouchy (1946-1949); Juan Meier (1950-1955); José Tabuena (1956-1958); O. R. Scully (1959-1960); J. Humberto Cairus (1961-1969); C. Milton Gerber (1970-1973); Angel Alsanoglou (1974-1979); Daniel Arn (1980-1984); José María Hage (1985-1987); Eduardo G. Schmidt (1988-1993); Carlos T. Kalbermatter (1994-1996); Leonidas Ariel Meda (1997-2005); Carlos Gill (2006-2007); Dario M. Caviglione (2008-2013); Ivan Rosales (2014-2018); J. Horacio Cayrus (2018-present).

Secretaries: N. Z. Town (1906); Arthur Fulton (1907-1908); G. E. Hartman (1909-1917); J. A. Westermeyer (1918); D. J. Weiss (1919-1928); Santiago Weiss (1929-1930); E. R. Kunstmann (1931); V. L. Gambetta (1932); S. R. Penis (1933); H. P. Beskow (1934); Juan Zevallos R. (1935-1937); Alfredo Bellido (1938-1941); Claudio Krieghof (1942-1943); D. J. Weiss (1944); Romualdo Kalbermatter (1945-1953); R. N. Rojas (1954); E. E. Pidoux (1956-1958); M. N. Soto (1959-1961); Roald Wensell (1962-1965); O. E. Cesan (1966-1968); B. C. Kalbermatter (1969-1976); René Chuquimia (1977-1981); Efraín Roberto Mato (1982-1985); Orlando D. Hengen (1986-1987); Marcelo B. Fucks (1988-1989); Manuel Lastra (1990-1993); Eugenio Di Dionisio (1994-1998); Carlos A. Sapia (1999-2004); Carlos Gill (2005); Horacio V. Fernández (2006-2013); Elvio Silvero (2014-2015); J. Horacio Cayrus (2016-2018); Javier A. Holm (2018-present).

Treasurers: N. Z. Town (1906); Arthur Fulton (1907-1908); G. E. Hartman (1909-1911); Julio Ernst (1913-1915); Santiago Mangold (1916-1917); J. A. Westermeyer (1918); D. J. Weiss (1919-1928); Santiago Weiss (1929-1930); E. R. Kunstmann (1931); V. L. Gambetta (1932); S. R. Penis (1933); H. P. Beskow (1934); Juan Zevallos R. (1935-1937); Alfredo Bellido (1938-1941); Claudio Krieghof (1942-1943); D. J. Weiss (1944); Romualdo Kalbermatter (1945-1953); R. N. Rojas (1954); E. E. Pidoux (1956-1958); M. N. Soto (1959-1961); Roald Wensell (1962-1965); O. E. Cesan (1966-1968); B. C. Kalbermatter (1969-1976); René Chuquimia (1977-1981); Efraín Roberto Mato (1982-1985); Orlando D. Hengen (1986-1987); Marcelo B. Fucks (1988-1989); Manuel Lastra (1990-1994); Raúl Kahl (1995-2005); Roberto D. Nestares (2006-2010); Claudio M. Pittana (2011-2018); Edgardo Iván Heinz (2018-present).<sup>90</sup>

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