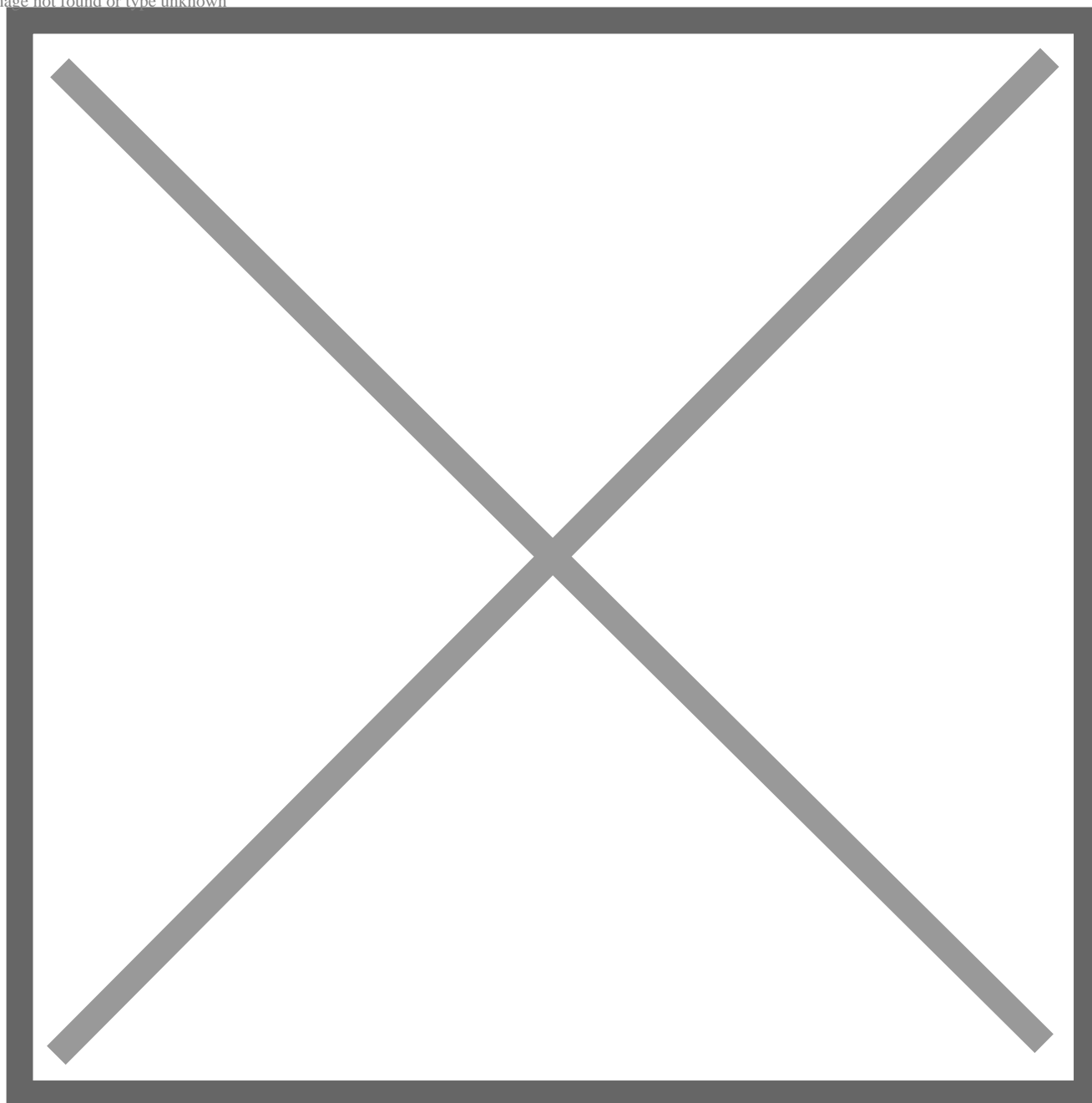


Image not found or type unknown



Eastern Ukrainian Mission

JÓN HJÖRLEIFUR STEFÁNSSON, AND LEV P. VERTYLO

Jón Hjörleifur Stefánsson, M.A.,
is a Ph.D. candidate, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

Lev P. Vertylo, B.A. in ministry (Zaoksky Theological Seminary, Russia), M.A. in religion (Andrews University, U.S.A.), graduated from the Donetsk S.S. Prokofiev Conservatory with the specialty of "Live Performer, Orchestra Singer and Music Master." He was teaching music for 11 years. Vertylo served the Church as a pastor (1988 to 1995), in the UUC headquarters and the Ukrainian Adventist Center of Higher Education (1995-2010), the president of the Eastern Ukrainian Mission/UUC (elected in 2014), and the president of the Eastern Dnieper Conference/UUC (elected in February 2019).

The Eastern Ukrainian Mission is the easternmost Ukrainian church unit, in operation since 2014.

Territory and Statistics (2017)

Territory: Donetsk and Luhansk Regions

Population: 6,463,333

Membership: 3,409

Churches: 65

Origin of Seventh-day Adventist Work in the Territory

During the time of Imperial Russia, the territory now covered by the Eastern Ukrainian Mission belonged to the Kharkov and Yekaterinoslav Governorates, and the Province of the Don Cossack Host. The last is never mentioned as such in territory descriptions of pre-Soviet church units in the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*.² Adventist missionary work in the Russian Empire started in Ukraine in the late nineteenth century. As the work prospered, the Russian Mission was subdivided into numerous church units. Information about the Adventist Church in the USSR ceased in the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* between 1931 and 1981. The last known church unit to have covered the territory of the present Eastern Ukrainian Mission was the Azov Conference. For the commencement of Adventist work in the territory, see the article on the Azov Conference and its predecessors.

Organizational History

In 1967, 1978, and 1981, Ukrainian church units were organized, all called Districts. They first appeared in the *Yearbook* in 1982, after decades of no reports from Ukraine due to Communism. They were listed under the Association of Seventh-day Adventists in the Ukrainian SSR—the Ukrainian Union Conference from 1990 onwards³

Two of these Districts were the Donetsk and Odessa Districts, organized in 1978 and 1967, respectively. The Donetsk District comprised the Donetsk, Voroshilovgrad (called Luhansk from 1991 onward)⁴ and Zaporozhye Regions. Its headquarters were located at ul. Dnepropetrovskaya 5, Donetsk. Its membership in 1982 was 1,038. The senior pastor was N. F. Trusuk. The Odessa District comprised the Odessa and Nikolaev Regions, with its headquarters located at ul. Ilyachovskaya 62, Odessa. Its membership in 1982 was 660, and the senior pastor was G. G. Galan.⁵

The Odessa District grew to include also the Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, and Poltava Regions—or perhaps the territorial description is inadequate in the first years.⁶

In 1987 the Ukrainian Districts were reorganized. The Donetsk District and part of the Odessa District merged into the Eastern Ukrainian District. Its territory was the Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Voroshilovgrad, and Zaporizhia Regions. The address was Pokrisheva Street 19-A, Donetsk. Membership was 1,673. The only initial officer listed was President N. G. Trusuk.⁷

In 1990 all the Ukrainian districts became conferences, so the Eastern Ukrainian District became the Eastern Ukrainian Conference. Its territory remained the same as that of the District. The headquarters moved to ul. Kalmana 24, Donetsk. Membership was 2,434. The initial officers were President V. S. Neikura, Secretary N. G. Zinuk, and Treasurer S. S. Drozd.⁸

In 1995, the headquarters relocated to ul. Arteleriyaska 30, Kharkiv.⁹

In 1996, the Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkov, and Zaporozhie Regions were cut off and organized as the Eastern Dnieper Conference. The remaining territory of the Eastern Ukrainian Conference was now the Donetsk and Lugansk Regions. Its membership dropped accordingly. In the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* of 1996 the number was 13,184 and the year after it was 5 323. The conference headquarters moved back to Kalmana Street 24, Donetsk¹⁰

In 2001 the headquarters was listed at Baydukova Street 89, Donetsk,¹¹

After the division of the conference in 1996, membership dwindled until in 2014 it was ca. 3500. That year the church unit was demoted to a mission.¹² Membership has continued to decrease.¹³

List of Presidents

Donetsk District Senior Pastor: Nobody listed, 1978–81; N. F. Trusuk, 1982–87.

Kharkov District. Senior Pastor: Nobody listed, 1978–81; P. G. Titkov, 1982–84.

Odessa District Senior Pastor: Nobody listed, 1967–81; G. G. Galan, 1982–87.

Eastern Ukrainian District. President: N. G. Trusuk, 1987–88; V. S. Neikurs, 1989.

Eastern Ukrainian Conference President: V. S. Neikurs, 1990–92; I. F. Khiminets, 1993–95; nobody listed, 1996; L. T. Voloschuk, 1997–98; nobody listed, 1999; Peter V. Ganulich, 2000–2001; Nikolay V. Tuk, 2002–2004; Victor V. Alekseenko, 2005–2007; Victor I. Antonyuk, 2008–2012; Vasiliy V. Kostyuk, 2013; Victor I. Antonyuk, 2014.

Eastern Ukrainian Mission President: Lev P. Vertylo, 2015–.

SOURCES

“Annual Charts and Statistics” for “Eastern Ukrainian Conference (1989–2013)” and “Eastern Ukrainian Mission (2014–2017).” Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research,

http://adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=123566,

http://adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=123568, both accessed July 2, 2019.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Washington, D.C./Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald. Various years.

NOTES

1. For territory and statistics, see “Eastern Ukrainian Mission,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2018), 79.?
2. If this administrative unit is identified in the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* under another nomenclature, this may bring to light other church units that operated in the territory besides the Azov Conference.?
3. “Association of Seventh-day Adventist [sic] in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1982), 335; “Ukrainian Union Conference,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1990), 348.?
4. Compare former years of territory description with that of “Eastern Ukrainian Conference,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1991), 343.?
5. For information and statistics on the Districts at their commencement, see “Donetsk District” and “Odessa District,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, (1982), 336.?
6. “Odessa District,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1986), 364. When all the ten original Districts with their descriptions are mapped out on a map of Ukraine, four Regions are not listed under any of them: Chernihiv, Dnipopetrovsk, Poltava, and Suma. See “Association of the Seventh-day Adventist in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1982), 335–36.?
7. For information and statistics of the District at its beginning, see “Eastern Ukrainian District,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1988), 374.?
8. For information and statistics on the Conference at its beginning, see “Eastern Ukrainian Conference,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1990), 349.?
9. “Eastern Ukrainian Mission,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1995), 105–106.?
10. 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.?
11. “Eastern Ukrainian Conference,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2001), 120.?
12. “Eastern Ukrainian Mission,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2015), 86.?
13. For membership numbers through the years, see “Annual Charts and Statistics” for “Eastern Ukrainian Conference (1989–2013)” and “Eastern Ukrainian Mission (2014–2017),” Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, http://adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=123566, http://adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=123568, both accessed on July 2, 2019.?