



Gulf Mexican Conference headquarters.

Photo courtesy of Gulf Mexican Conference.

Gulf Mexican Conference

CARLOS ALONSO ALVARADO

Carlos Alonso Alvarado De Castro, M.P.Th. (Inter-American Adventist Theological Seminary, Mayagüez, Puerto Rico), is the communication, health ministries, and youth ministries director of Gulf Mexican Conference. He had previously served the church as a district pastor. He is married to María del Pilar Bazán Barrera and has two children.

Gulf Mexican Conference is a part of North Mexican Union Conference in the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

Territory and Statistics

Gulf Mexican Conference includes the state of San Luis Potosí and the following municipalities of Tamaulipas state: Altamira, Aldama, Antiguo Morelos, Bustamante, Ciudad Madero, Gómez Farías, González, Güémez, Hidalgo, Jaumave, Llera, Mainero, Ciudad Mante, Miquihuana, Nuevo Morelos, Ocampo, Padilla, Palmillas, San Carlos, Tampico, Tula, Ciudad Victoria, Municipio de Casas, Villagrán, and Xicoténcatl. In 2020 it had 67 churches and 17,164 members in a population of 4,703,635. Its office is located at Calle Mier y Terán 301, Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico. It is a part of North Mexican Union Conference.¹ As of 2018 the conference had 12 ordained ministers and nine licensed ministers.

Gulf Mexican Conference territory shares borders with Guanajuato, Querétaro, Hidalgo, and Veracruz to the south; Nuevo León and Zacatecas to the west; and the Gulf of Mexico to the east. It shares its northern borders with the territory of North Tamaulipas Mexican Conference.

Institutions

Colegio Niños Héroes is located at Calle Guayalejo 109 Norte, Colonia Miguel Alemán, in Ciudad Mante, Tamaulipas. It began its activities in 1960 offering grades 1 to 3 at the primary level. It currently offers pre-primary, elementary, and middle school levels and has an enrollment of 83 students. There are 16 staff members: three who work in administration, one director, and 12 teachers.

Instituto Salvador Marchisio is located at Calle Constitución 945, Barrio de San Sebastián, in the city of San Luis Potosí. It was founded in 1988 and offered the first grades of the elementary level. It currently offers pre-primary, elementary, and middle school levels and has an enrollment of 105 students. There are 14 staff members: two who work in administration, ten teachers, and two office and service staff.

Colegio Constitución Mexicana was founded in 1988 in Ciudad Madero, Tamaulipas. Currently it operates out of two buildings. It offers basic education in the building located at Calle 18 de Marzo 1300, south of Colonia Obrera, and the elementary, middle, and secondary levels in the building located at Calle 302 Pachuca in Colonia Primero de Mayo. The institution has an enrollment of 124 students and 27 staff members, among whom are teachers, support, and administrative staff.

Instituto Filadelfia is located on Libramiento Naciones Unidas 755, Colonia Oralia Guerra, in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas. It was founded in 1996. It currently offers pre-primary, elementary, and middle school levels and has an enrollment of 86 students. It has 18 employees of whom five work in administration and the rest are teachers and staff.

Getsemaní Camp is located in San Pedrito in the municipality of Gómez Farías, Tamaulipas, on 12.35 hectares of land. It began operation in 1999. Its facilities include 32 cabins for up to 320 people, an auditorium with a

seating capacity of 1,000, a kitchen, bathrooms, showers, and three meeting rooms.

Origin of Church in Conference Territory

San Luis Potosí was the third city in the Mexican territory where the gospel was preached broadly and in a coordinated approach. In 1902 the colporteur A. G. Bodwell arrived in San Luis Potosí and planted the seed of Adventist truth through publications, specifically through the magazine, *El mensajero de la verdad*. Other colporteurs followed, continuing the spread of the message and organizing a congregation of believers.²

In 1902 the lay missionary Salvador Marchisio, an Italian-American immigrant, joined the efforts of colporteur Bodwell in preaching the gospel through publications throughout the state of San Luis Potosí. On their tour of the state, they reached La Biznaga, a city 170 kilometers north of the state capital. There they met a group of people who were interested in learning about the Adventist faith. As a result of their interest, Salvador Marchisio established a church and a school in La Biznaga. Both buildings still stand as commemorative monuments to the evangelism that took place in that city.³

In 1907 Pastor Arthur G. Daniels, president of the General Conference, and Pastor Willie C. White visited the church in the city of San Luis Potosí. Their instructions and powerful biblical preaching inspired and greatly stimulated the church work in that city. Over the years the city of San Luis Potosí became an evangelism center for other states in the central and northern parts of the country, including the state of Tamaulipas. The church members who are now part of Tamaulipas and San Luis Potosí had been members of several other established missions and conferences in the area.⁴

Events that Led to Organization of Gulf Mexican Conference

Before Gulf Mexican Conference was organized, Northeast Mexican Conference directly promoted and directed the church work in the states of Tamaulipas and San Luis Potosí.

With the desire to grow, on October 12, 1997, Northeast Mexican Conference held a special meeting with 236 delegates to discuss and approve an adjustment to their territory and the creation of a new field. Northeast Mexican Conference requested that the Inter-American Division support their recommendation.⁵ After having studied the request, on November 4, 1997, the Inter-American Division approved the reorganization of the territory. The states of San Luis Potosí and Tamaulipas were assigned to the newly created Gulf Mexican Mission with main offices in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, and the states of Nuevo León and Coahuila were assigned to Northeast Mexican Conference with main offices in Monterrey, Nuevo León.⁶

On January 13, 1998, the North Mexican Union Conference board of directors appointed the administrators of Gulf Mexican Mission. Pastor Gabriel Velázquez Guerrero was elected president, with Ofir Luna Alpírez as secretary-treasurer.⁷ During Northeast Mexican Conference's third triennial congress on January 25, 1998, the

new mission officially began operation.⁸ The Gulf Mexican Mission office was officially inaugurated on March 8, 1998, by President Armando Miranda of the North Mexican Union Conference.⁹

After nearly four years since the Gulf Mexican Mission was established to spread the Adventist work in the states of Tamaulipas and San Luis Potosí, on October 24, 2001, the Inter-American Division granted Gulf Mexican Mission a change of status from mission to conference.¹⁰

Growth and Development of the Conference

As time went on Gulf Mexican Conference grew in all aspects, especially in the economic and missionary areas. Due to this growth, the conference soon required a territorial readjustment. From November 19 to 22, 2007, during the North Mexican Union Conference yearend plenary meeting, the creation of the North Tamaulipas experimental field of the Gulf Mexican Conference was approved. The Gulf Mexican Conference districts were divided so that Gulf Mexican Conference would keep the central and southern parts of the state of Tamaulipas in its territory. The North Tamaulipas experimental field would have as its territory the northern districts of the state.¹¹ After a period of testing and exhaustive evaluation, on May 20, 2009, the Inter-American Division approved the territorial reorganization of Gulf Mexican Conference and the creation of North Tamaulipas Mission (now North Tamaulipas Mexican Conference).¹²

From July 2013 to July 2019, 3,313 members were added to the territory of the Gulf Mexican Conference.¹³ As of 2017, of the 25 municipalities in the Gulf Mexican Conference territory in the state of Tamaulipas, there was an Adventist presence in 16, leaving nine municipalities without an Adventist presence. Of the 58 municipalities in the conference territory in the state of San Luis Potosí, 33 have an Adventist presence, leaving 25 without an Adventist presence.¹⁴ These unentered territories represent new mission fields for the church to work in the future.

List of Presidents

Gabriel Velázquez Guerrero (1998-2001); José Dzul Trejo (2001-2005); Francisco Pérez Flores (2005-2013); Obed Almanza Torres (2013-2017); Valdemar Torres Aguilar (2017-present).

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NOTES

1. "Gulf Mexican Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, accessed March 22, 2021, <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=14104>.
2. Félix Cortés Antonio and Velino Salazar Escarpulli, *Esforzados y Valientes* (Montemorelos, Nuevo León, México: Editorial Perspectiva y Análisis, 2015), 20.
3. Floyd Greenleaf, *The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Latin America and the Caribbean*, vol. 1 (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1992), 192.

4. Velino Salazar Escarpulli, *Cien años de Adventismo en México* (Montemorelos, Nuevo León, México: Centro de Producción Unión Mexicana del Norte, 1997), 44, 47-48.
 5. Northeast Mexican Conference Extraordinary Congress, October 12, 1997, secretariat archives.
 6. Inter-American Division Year-end Board Meeting, November 4, 1997, secretariat archives.
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