



Rostovsko-Kalmykskaya Conference (CaUM) Headquarters

Photo courtesy Rostovsko-Kalmykskaya Conference.

Rostov-Kalmykia Conference

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Rostov-Kalmykia Conference is a part of the Caucasus Union Mission in the Euro-Asia Division of Seventh-day Adventists. It was organized in 2001. Its headquarters is in Rostov-on-Don, Russian Federation.

Territory: Kalmykia and Rostov Region in the Russian Federation.

Statistics (June 30, 2021): Churches, 38; membership, 2,229; population, 3,055,835.¹

Origin of Adventist Work in the Territory of the Conference²

The first evidence of the spread of the Adventist message in the territory of the Don region dates back to the early 1880s. The parents of brother I. F. Ginter and other Volga Germans lived near the Romanovskaya village in Salsk District. There the aged Christopher Ginter and his friends began to observe the Sabbath since 1883. In 1886 Pastor Conrad Laubhan admitted those brothers to the Adventist Church.

Around the same time, the former Baptist preacher Eduard Loinke joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in America and started to send Adventist printed literature to his countrymen in the Don region. As a result, the Don congregation was organized by Conrad Laubhan in 1887.

Organizational History³

In 1901 the South Russian Conference (since 1907–East Russian Conference) headquartered in Rostov-on-Don was established. Unfortunately, due to the ill health of H. J. Löbsack (until 1909 he lived among the German settlers in Alexandrodar, which is now the village of Kochubeyevskoye, Stavropol Territory), the beginning of the Adventist ministry in Rostov-on-Don was delayed.

In 1904 the Three Angels' Messages were proclaimed in Taganrog that resulted in organizing, thanks to the efforts of Mikhail Demidov and his family members, an Adventist congregation. Among the first Adventists were also the families Partala, Samoilenko, and Mikhailichenko. All of them belonged formerly to the Orthodox Church. According to available statistics, in 1908-1910 the Taganrog congregation had already 20 members.

In 1910 Rostov-on-Don was visited by Adventists from the United States, including V. P. Kendrus, F. S. Tyutyunzhev, and A. Ya. Tislenko.

In 1914 preacher G. F. Ginter and Bible worker I. I. Gust, the graduates from the Friedensau Mission School, came to Rostov-on-Don.

Ya. S. Tislenko is considered to be the first Adventist baptized in Rostov-on-Don. By that time there was also a sister in that city who had been baptized in an Adventist congregation in Stavropol.

In August 1914 regular worship services started at 34, Pokrovskiy Pereulok (now Zhuravlev Street). Some Baptists joined the Adventist Church. The first Adventist congregation in Rostov-on-Don numbered 13 members.

In 1915 over 20 Latvian Adventists headed by Pastor A. I. Eglit, who were fleeing from armed hostilities, moved to Rostov-on-Don. The Rostov congregation welcomed warmly their brothers and sisters in faith. During the three years that Pastor A. I. Eglit was in charge of the Rostov congregation, the number of church members

increased to 100.

In 1915 G. F. Ginter headed the missionary work in the Caucasus.

In the 1920s the Don Conference was organized and chaired by J. J. Wilson. In 1924 the Adventist congregation appeared in the town of Belaya Kalitva in the Rostov Region. From 1926 Pastor V. M. Teppone carried out his ministry first in Rostov-on-Don and then in the Caucasus.

In 1938 the Rostov congregation was unregistered. It was only in February 1945 that the Adventists in that city could officially resume their worship services attended by 17 members.

In 1946 an Adventist company appeared in the Tarasovsky District of the Rostov Region. A short time later the denominational work in the North Caucasus was headed by K. E. Titarenko, who lived in the village of Tarasivka, Rostov Region, and also took care of the Rostov congregation.

In 1951 there were 57 members in the Rostov congregation. They were served by Pastor V. L. Lashko, who lived in Taganrog.

In 1955 the Pavel Matsanov's family moved to Rostov-on-Don where Pastor Pavel Matsanov found an efficient church and talented assistants, including local elder Alexander Alekseev.

The Rostov church was actively growing, and there was an urgent need for them to have a prayer house. On September 2, 1955, a small building was purchased at 10-ya Liniya Street 77 that was refurnished to become a chapel. Within a short time, thanks to the talent and dedication of Pavel Matsanov and enthusiasm of local church members, the city of Rostov-on-Don turned into one of the most active centers of Adventism in the USSR. Meanwhile, P. A. Matsanov organized youth missionary tours to the Caucasus.

Rostov-on-Don played a prominent role in the development of Russian Adventism as the center of the formerly large South-East Union and as a center for training new workers. The literary evangelism has become a great influence, particularly with the books of Ellen G. White such as *The Desire of Ages*, *Christ's Object Lessons*, *Steps to Christ*, and *Patriarchs and Prophets*.

The active work of Pavel Matsanov and the church in Rostov-on-Don didn't forget about the atheistic authorities. On May 15, 1959, by the decision of the People's Court of the city of Rostov-on-Don, the prayer house was confiscated by the state. Up to May 1995, the premises were occupied by a consumer services center. In the meantime, P. A. Matsanov was ordered to leave Rostov-on-Don. The ministry of the Rostov Church was again headed by K. E. Titarenko.

In 1957 the Seventh-day Adventist congregation was organized in the city of Shakhty where a church building located at Lenin Street was purchased in 1958. During two years of his service, Pastor Vladimir Sorokin increased the membership to 60.

In 1965 Peter Titkov moved to Rostov-on-Don, and the Rostov members began to conduct worship services in the house that belonged to Baptists.

In the late 1970s, an Adventist company appeared in the town of Tsimlyansk, and in the late 1980s, in the town of Krasnyy Sulin of the Rostov Region, the latter was officially registered as a church in 1994.

In the early 1990s, due to an awakened interest to spirituality among the population, the gospel message was efficiently spread in the cities and villages of the Rostov Region and the Republic of Kalmykia. In 1991 a large evangelistic campaign was conducted by Jimmy Zachary in Rostov-on-Don. The campaign culminated in the baptism that resulted in planting new churches. At that time the work in the Caucasus was headed by Pastor I. F. Parashchuk.

Today there are six Adventist churches in Rostov-on-Don.

In 1991, thanks to evangelistic meetings held by Adventists from Belaya Kalitva, an Adventist company (which then became a church) was organized in the city of Kamensk-Shakhtinskiy. In 1992 the evangelistic meetings were held in the city of Millerovo, thus resulting in planting a local church in 1997.

In as little as ten years, over thirty Adventist churches and companies were organized in almost all cities with a population of over one hundred thousand. Today the Rostov-Kalmykia Conference comprises 41 churches and 25 companies with 2,436 members. The denominational activities are focused on medical missionary work, health promotion, and the organization of club ministries for young people and teenagers.

List of Presidents

M. G. Oleynik, 2001-2008; N. S. Chekelek, 2008-2010; A. A. Kachalaba, 2010-2015; M. V. Oliynik, 2015-Present.

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NOTES

1. "Rostov-Kalmykia Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2021), <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=20751>.
2. G.I. Loeb sack, *Velikoye Adventistskoye dvizheniye i Adventisty Sed'mogo Dnia v Rossii* (Rostov-na-Donu: Altair, 2006), 160-162, 167.
3. Ibid.

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