



Current Northwest Argentine Mission headquarters.

Photo courtesy of Luciano Almeida.

Northwest Argentine Mission

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Northwest Argentine Mission (Misión Argentina del Noroeste, or MANo) is an administrative unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church located in the territory of Argentina Union Conference (Unión Argentina, or UA). It is headquartered at Ernesto Padilla Avenue, 271, Zip Code T4000LCE, in city of San Miguel de Tucumán, province of Tucumán, Republic of Argentina.¹

Territory and Statistics

This administrative unit is responsible for the Adventist work in the provinces of Catamarca, Jujuy, Salta, Santiago del Estero, and Tucumán. In the MANo territory there is a population of around 7,320,563, of whom 14,037 are Adventists. The ratio is about one Adventist per 521 inhabitants.² This field is organized into 15 pastoral districts with a total of 101 congregations, including 53 organized churches and 48 groups³

MANo manages two institutions of the Adventist Education Network, serving about 1,040 school-aged children and teenagers. These schools are: Salta Adventist Academy, located in the city of Salta, province of Salta, with 611 students;⁴ and Tucuman Adventist Academy, located in San Miguel de Tucumán, Tucumán, with 429 students. Both schools offer preschool, elementary, and high school education.⁵

MANo is responsible for managing the Tucuman New Time Radio, at FM 89.7, which is headquartered on Virgen de la Merced, 336, San Miguel de Tucumán, Tucumán.⁶ There are other radio stations (one in Catamarca, one in Jujuy, four in Salta, and another one in the province of Tucumán⁷) that operate in MANo territory, but they are administered by the Adventist Media Center, Argentine branch. This mission field also has open channels and cable TV channels that contribute to the fulfillment of the Church's mission. The potential reach of these stations is about 1,052,794 people.⁸

MANo brings the gospel to people throughout its territory through the work of 133 employees, of whom 23 are pastors—14 with ministerial credentials and nine licensed. There are also five workers with missionary credentials and one worker with a missionary license. The other 104 people work in other administrative activities.⁹

The Origin of the Adventist Church Work in the Mission's Territory

The Adventist message was first preached in South America in the 19th century by cross-cultural missionaries such as evangelist canvassers.¹⁰ One result of a canvasser's work in Chile was the conversion of a former Baptist pastor named Enrique Balada. He later became an Adventist pastor who worked in Chile and in northern Argentina. When he was serving as an Adventist pastor in the first months of 1908, Pastor Balada visited the city of Tucumán, capital of the province, and he informed the Church about the urgent need for canvassers to work in that area.¹¹

In 1911, José L. Oris was sent by Argentine Conference, now known as Central Argentine Conference, to open an Adventist mission in the city of Salta, in the province of Salta.¹² The following year he expanded the field of his evangelistic activities to the province of Jujuy, where two people accepted the Sabbath message.¹³

Also, in 1912, a missionary named L. Laconi began evangelistic work in the capital of Mendoza.¹⁴ In the same place, a year later, the canvasser Manuel Alcayaga informed the Church that a pastor was needed to attend to the increasing interest in Adventism that had been awakened in that city. Subsequently, Alcayaga extended his

canvassing activities¹⁵ to the provinces of San Juan, La Rioja, and San Luis.¹⁶ At that time there were also Adventist believers in the town of La Banda in the province of Santiago del Estero.¹⁷

At the beginning of the work, the mission field currently managed by Northwest Argentine Mission was part of Argentine Conference, and that continued until Church meetings took place from February 24 to March 5, 1921. At that time the territory was reorganized. Argentine Conference took the name North Argentine Conference and started to promote the Adventist work in the provinces of Entre Ríos, Santa Fe, Córdoba, La Rioja, Santiago del Estero, Tucumán, Catamarca, Salta, Jujuy, and the territory of Los Andes.¹⁸

In late January 1929, Austral Union Conference, then known as Argentina Union Conference, and North Argentine Conference began to study the possibility of establishing an administrative unit of the Church in the northwest part of Argentina. This new entity would serve the provinces of Santiago del Estero, Tucumán, Salta, Jujuy, Catamarca, La Rioja, and the territory of Los Andes.¹⁹ The plan was agreed to and, by the end of the year, the Argentine mission field was reorganized again. A new administrative unit was established with the name Misión de Tucumán (Tucuman Mission), later to become Northwestern Argentine Mission, that began to take care of part of the missionary territory currently covered by MANo.²⁰

By August 1930, the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Tucumán was organized with a membership of 16 people (not counting the canvassers José Calido and Alfredo Theringen).²¹ Not long after, in 1933, a new organization was established in the Argentine mission field and the territory that had composed Northwestern Argentine Mission was divided between Alto Parana Mission, now known as North Argentine Conference, and Cuyo Mission.²²

In 1944 the Northwest Argentine Mission, with headquarters in the capital of the province of Salta, was reorganized and its territory comprised the provinces of Salta, Jujuy, Tucumán, and Santiago del Estero. However, due to economic reasons, in 1946 it was decided that this territory would form a pastoral district under the management of North Mission. In early 1948, due to political and social circumstances, there was yet another reorganization of this mission field.²³ The establishment of Paraguay Mission, now known as Paraguay Union of Churches Mission took place and gave rise to North Argentine Mission, now known as North Argentine Conference, which was comprised of the territory of the provinces of Corrientes, Jujuy, Salta, Santiago del Estero, Tucumán, Misiones, and Formosa.²⁴

In the following years, although resources and workers were scarce, the Adventist work and the number of baptized believers in that region continued to grow. The seeds of the gospel continued to be sown with the help of many evangelist canvassers. These advances in the work meant that new Adventist institutions such as medical dispensaries and schools became necessary.²⁵ In 1957 members of the Adventist church in Salta decided to establish an Adventist school in that town.²⁶

The desire of these members was that their children receive an Adventist Christian education. On March 4, 1960, the Salta Adventist school was officially established as Bartolome Mitre Adventist School, now known as

Salta Adventist Academy. This school, which began by offering grades one through three, “became the first non-Catholic confessional private school in the province of Salta.”²⁷ Adventist education also progressed in the province of Tucumán. In the same month the current Tucuman Adventist Academy began operating. Government authorization for this school to operate as a primary school was received in April 1960.²⁸

Another way Adventist missionaries reached homes in Argentina was through radio and television. In 1965 the Adventist Church in South America broadcasted more than 500 radio programs per week, and six television programs were broadcasted weekly. Among the TV programs was *Aprende a Vivir* (*Learn to Live*), hosted by Pastor Edwin Mayer from Salta, which was broadcasted twice a week. Through this means of communication, new people were reached by the Adventist message.²⁹

In the 1970s Austral Union Conference, in order to better consolidate and organize the Adventist work in its territory, reconfigured the five administrative units of the Church that operated in Argentina and reduced them to three. Thus, the North Argentine Mission assumed responsibility for all the cities of Catamarca province.³⁰ With this modification, the geographic area of that mission became too large for the few pastors and workers available. Even so, the missionaries were not discouraged and they continued with their evangelistic efforts. In mid-1973, Pastor Daniel Belvedere led a three-month missionary campaign in the city of Santiago del Estero, and 228 people were baptized. This was the largest baptism in the history of Austral Union Conference until that time.³¹

Despite difficulties, the Church continued to fulfill its mission and reach the most important cities of Argentina. In 1987 SDA membership had reached 16,717 in the northern region, and that same year 1,642 people joined the Adventist community. In addition, the number of churches in the whole area reached 62. Thus, the Church leaders decided that this region should go through a new reorganization.³²

The Mission’s Organizational History

In 1988 Austral Union Conference decided to reorganize the territory of North Argentine Mission. The purpose of this was to reduce the great distances that had to be traveled from west to east in the northern Argentine territory and to promote a closer relationship between the leaders of the Church and the growing membership. A new administrative unit was established with the name of Northwest Argentine Mission, which was responsible for work in the provinces of Catamarca, Jujuy, Salta, Santiago del Estero, and Tucumán.³³

Pastor Normann Marker was named the first president of the new mission, and the secretary-treasurer was Pastor Adelio Boidi. The first MANo headquarters was established at Mate de Luna Avenue, 2399, in San Miguel Tucumán. The number of Adventist believers that first year was 5,454 and 15 churches were organized. The ratio at the time of establishment was one Adventist per 622 inhabitants of the Argentine northwest.³⁴

By 1990 MANo had the assistance of ten ministers and 18 additional workers to serve the entire region. From 1988 to 1990, about 2,250 people from that region joined the Church through baptism. In the same period, one more church was formally established in the territory. Thus, by the end of 1990, about 6,700 people were members of the Northwest Argentine Mission.³⁵

From October 10 to 13, 1991, in order to involve children and teenagers in the activities planned by the Church, the MANo team held the first camporees³⁶ in its history. This important regional event was titled *El Cadillac* and it took place in the city of Tucumán. Since then, several events of this type have been promoted in the MANo missionary territory, demonstrating to children and young people that they are essential and should play an important role in the Church.³⁷ The Northwest Argentine Mission now serves 1,224 youth through 41 Pathfinder Clubs³⁸ and 669 boys and girls through 27 Adventurer Clubs³⁹ throughout its territory.⁴⁰

In the new millennium MANo continued to carry out activities focused on the mission and development of its members. On August 5, 2012, the MANo staff and one thousand Church volunteers participated in the missionary project *Impacto Esperanza (Hope Impact)*.⁴¹ They delivered 50,000 free missionary books to the population of the capital of Catamarca. The books were titled *La Gran Esperanza (The Great Hope)* by Ellen G. White. This event preceded the planting of a new church in that city. The distribution of literature and a series of evangelistic meetings were part of the plan to strengthen the Adventist presence in that locality.⁴²

Another event that contributed to the promotion of Adventism happened in 2013 when the Adventist Media Center channel was installed in the city of Tucumán, with 24-hour transmission. Since then the Adventist Media Center television programming has been added to the work done by New Time Radio in different towns of Tucumán.⁴³ In the city of Santiago del Estero, almost 40 years after the arrival of Adventism in that city, the Northwest Argentine Mission Plenary Board created a new pastoral district there, so the city now has two full-time pastors to attend to the needs of the members and to help in evangelization.⁴⁴

The Adventist work continued to advance structurally as well. Between 2010 and 2015, 12 churches were built in the MANo mission territory. One of them was erected at the end of 2015, after the mission purchased property in the city of Salta and relocated the Adventist school in that city. In mid-2016, the Church purchased a functioning FM radio station in order to transform it into New Time Radio. Transmission began in August 2016.

At that time the Church was well established in the Argentine northwest and was using various means of evangelization.⁴⁵ In 2016 the Northwest Argentine Mission was promoting the preaching of the gospel to the population through its 213 small groups⁴⁶ and 480 missionary couples. On August 2, 2018, the Northwest Argentine Mission inaugurated its headquarters in a new location. MANo began to share the land on which Tucuman Adventist Academy was located, at San Lorenzo, 2910, San Miguel de Tucumán. Sometime later, the mission headquarters was relocated to Ernesto Padilla Avenue, 271, where it remains today.⁴⁷

The history of the Northwest Argentine Mission shows that trust in God and the effort made by men and women in the past has advanced the Adventist message in this region. The efforts of the pioneers continue to be an inspiration to Adventists today. Their witness of faith encourages more people to trust God. MANo will continue to help them become involved in the preaching of the gospel.⁴⁸

Chronology of Administrative Leaders⁴⁹

Presidents: Normann Marker (1988-1990); Carlos Karpiuk (1991-1992); Orlando Ciuffardi (1993-1998); Carlos Hein (1999-2005); Mario Vergara (2006-2013); Leónidas Ariel Meda (2014-2017); Rubén Rivero (2017-present).

Secretaries: Adelio Boidi (1988-1990); Aníbal Osorio (1991-1995); Hernan Buchhammer (1996-2003); Miguel Ángel Torales (2004-2008); Alberto Jesús Lencinas (2009-2012); Daniel Rosas (2013); Gabriel Cevasco (2014-2016); José A. Peñafiel (2016-2017); Roberto Cansina (2017-present).

Treasurers: Adelio Boidi (1989-1990); Aníbal Osorio (1991-1995); Hernan Buchhammer (1996-2003); Miguel Ángel Torales (2004-2008); Alberto Jesús Lencinas (2009-2012); Daniel Rosas (2013-2018); Rubén Lavooy (2018-present).⁵⁰

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4. *Instituto Adventista Salta* [Salta Adventist Academy], "Nosotros" [About Us], accessed on August 23, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3lbKxf7>.
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31. H. J. Peverini, "South American," *ARH*, October 19, 1973, 19.
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37. Desbravadores - Eterna Paixão [Pathfinders - Eternal Passion], Facebook post, July 1, 2012 (00:55 am), accessed on August 25, 2020, <https://bit.ly/31tkVCo>; Desbravadores - Eterna Paixão [Pathfinders - Eternal Passion], Facebook post, July 1, 2012 (00:55 am), accessed on August 25, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2CVyvFg>.
38. The Pathfinders Club is designed for boys and girls aged 10 to 15, regardless of their social classes, race and religion. They meet usually once a week to learn new skills and develop their talents and appreciation for nature. The Club organizes outdoor activities like camping, hiking, climbing, and exploring the woods and caves. The children are taught how to cook outdoors and make fire without matches. They are taught to fight the use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. *Seventh-day Adventist (Argentina) Church Website*, "Conquistadores – ¿Quiénes son los Conquistadores?," [Pathfinders - Who are the Pathfinders?], accessed on July 16, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3954UoM>.
39. "The Adventurers Club is a program for children from 6 to 9 years old, created by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in 1972. At the meetings, children carry out activities with a focus on physical, mental and spiritual development." *Seventh-day Adventist Church (Argentina) Website*, "Aventureros" [Adventurers], accessed on July 16, 2020, <https://bit.ly/32rhb5s>.
40. *Ministerio de los Conquistadores y Aventureros MANO* [MANO Pathfinders and Adventurers Ministry], "Estadísticas - Misión Argentina del Noroeste" [Statistics - Northwest Argentine Mission], accessed on August 25, 2020, <https://bit.ly/31secsA>.
41. Through the project Impacto Esperanza [Hope Impact], Adventists encourage reading and distribution of missionary books to the population of South America. For over a decade volunteers has been sharing not just books, but an opportunity to start over, be reconciled. In the past decade American Spanish Publishing House and Brazil Publishing House have produced more than 170 million books for missionaries. *Seventh-day Adventist Church (Argentina) Website*, "Impacto Esperanza - 10 Años" [Hope Impact - 10 Years], accessed on July 16, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2Bbs3JC>.
42. Seventh-day Adventist Church in Argentina, Facebook post, August 10, 2012 (12:05 pm), accessed on August 25, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3guEhLZ>; "Adventistas repartieron miles de libros en Catamarca" [Adventists distributed thousands of books in Catamarca], *CatamarcaActual*, August 5, 2012, accessed on August 25, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2EgJFp2>.

43. "Llevando esperanza a través de la radio" [Bringing hope through the radio], *En Marcha* [In Motion], November 2002, 4; "Nuevo Tiempo: siempre a la vanguardia" [Adventist Media Center: always at the forefront], *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], no. 4, year 113, April 2013, 22; "La iglesia crece en el noroeste argentino" [The church grows in the Argentine northwest], *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], no. 11, year 113, November 2013, 21; ASN Team and Unión Argentina [Argentina Union Conference], "Un Nuevo Tiempo para Tucumán" [A New Time for Tucumán], *Noticias Adventistas* [Adventist News], September 9, 2013, accessed on September 3, 2020, <https://bit.ly/34Zrb7i>.
44. Santiago del Estero Adventist Church, Facebook post, December 7, 2012 (03:26 pm), accessed on August 25, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2Ywmjly>.
45. "Gran cruzada solidaria de ADRA" [Great supportive crusade of ADRA], *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], no. 1, year 114, January 2014, 23; "Impacto Jujuy" [Jujuy Impact] *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], no. 8, year 114, August 2014, 7; José Peñafiel (former secretary of MANo), report sent to Eugenio Di Dionisio, September 20, 2016. Available in the Misión Argentina del Noroeste [Northwest Argentine Mission] Archives; Ariel Meda, "Misión Argentina del Noroeste" [Northwest Argentine Mission], *Jesús viene, ¡Resplandece!* [Jesus is coming, Shine!], *II Congreso Unión Argentina* [II Argentina Union Conference Congress] (December 16-19, 2015): 55, 67, 68, 86, 159-168.
46. A Small Group is a group of people who meet weekly with the goal of studying the Bible. The Adventists have adopted this model from the experience of the early Christians. The meetings are led by a leader, who leads the Bible study, also supported by a series of Adventist study materials. *Seventh-day Adventist Church (Argentina) Website*, "Ministerio Personal – Grupos Pequeños" [Personal Ministries - Small Groups], accessed on July 17, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3jf0n7C>.
47. Darío Caviglione, Facebook post, August 3, 2018 (07:28 am), accessed on August 25, 2020, <https://bit.ly/31pSUfe>; "Northwest Argentine Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2019), 229.
48. For more information about the MANo history, consult the following bibliographic sources: Henry F. Brown, "Here and There in the Austral Union," *South American Bulletin* 6, no. 9 (September, 1930): 5; Henry F. Brown, "Austral Notes," *South American Bulletin* 6, no. 10 (October 1930): 7; D.E. Dalinger, "Northwest Mission," *South American Bulletin* 7, no. 9 (September 1931): 6-7; Dalton Mato, "Catamarca, conmoción por plan de salud" [Catamarca, commotion for health plan], *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], no. 6, year 90 (June 1990): 12; Ricardo J. Cerdá, "Victorias de Cristo en el Norte Salteño" [Victories of Christ in the North of Salta], *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], no. 11, year 90 (November 1990): 11-12; Daniel Oscar Plenc, "Llamado al renunciamento" [Call to Renunciation], *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], no. 3, year 87 (March 1987): 22; Arbin Lust, "Cursos en Tucumán" [Courses in Tucumán], *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], no. 12, year 90 (December 1990): 13; Rubén Balaguer, "Seminario en Santiago del Estero" [Santiago del Estero Seminary], *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], no. 12, year 90 (December 1990): 13-14; Rubén Balaguer, "Alegres nuevas desde Santiago del Estero" [Happy news from Santiago del Estero], *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], no. 9 (September 1991): 13; "Misión Global en Catamarca" [Global Mission in Catamarca], *En Marcha* [In Motion], December 1997, 4; Arturo Tenorio, "Tocando puerta" [Knocking on the door], *En Marcha* [In Motion], December 1999, 6; "ADRA responde a las inundaciones del Noroeste Argentino" [ADRA responds to the floods of the Argentine Northwest], *En Marcha* [In Motion], June 2000, 5.

49. *Seventh-day Adventist Online Yearbook*, "Northwest Argentine Mission," accessed on August 23, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2FQVBhz>; "Northwest Argentine Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1989), 250; "Northwest Argentine Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association , 2019), 229. For more detailed verification of all Misión Argentina del Noroeste [Northwest Argentine Mission] leaders, see the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbooks* from 1962 to 2020.
50. More information about the Northwest Argentine Mission can be found on the website: <https://mano.adventistas.org/> or on social networks – Facebook: [@MisionArgentinadelNoroeste](#), Instagram: [@adventistas.mano](#) and Twitter: [@AdventistasMANo](#).

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