



Cameroon Union Mission headquarters, Yaounde, Cameroon.

Photo courtesy of Meting Jean Pourrat.

Cameroon Union Mission

VALÈRE GUILLAUME ASSEMBE MINYONO

Valère Guillaume Assembe Minyono is an ordained minister from Cameroon. He started serving God as a church elder and teacher. He graduated from the Adventist Seminary of West Africa in Nigeria, with a B.A. in theology, and the Adventist University of Africa, with an M.A. in leadership. He has served as a field pastor, and an officer in the Cameroon Central South Conference, Chad Mission, and Central Africa Union Mission. He has been president of the Cameroon Union Mission since 2013. He is married to Micheline Nyakang Ateba.

Cameroon Union Mission belongs to the West-Central African Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Formerly part of the Central African Union Mission, Cameroon Union Mission was organized in 1949. Its territory was divided and renamed in 2013, and subsequently reorganized again in 2018 and 2020. Its headquarters is in Yaounde, Cameroon.

Cameroon Union Mission comprises the territory of Cameroon including the Adamaoua-Mayo Rey, Central-South Cameroon, East Cameroon, Mbam-Sanaga, North Cameroon, Nyong-Afamba, and West Cameroon conferences and the Benoue-Faro Mission.

As of June 30, 2021, Cameroon Union Mission had 997 churches with a membership of 117,948. The territory's population was 27,338,000.

Origins and Development of Adventist Work in the Southern part of Cameroon

In November 1926, William Harrison Anderson and T. M. French, both Americans, came to Cameroon from South Africa.¹ Their long journey had taken them from South Africa to Cameroon, via Angola, and the present Central African Republic. They entered Cameroon from the east. After some exploration, they chose Nanga Eboko as the site of the first missionary station. Traditional Chief Bessala Etong gave them fifty-five hectares of land on which to establish the Adventist mission. Because of language problems, W. H Anderson and T. M. French returned in December 1927. In 1928, R. L. Jones arrived and continued the work begun by his predecessors. On March 11, 1929, the Southern European Division sent Marius Raspal to Cameroon. The first six indigenous people to convert to the Adventist faith were baptized in April 1929. They were Ndi Daniel, Medjo Endangte Josué, and Antoine Mfoumi along with their wives.

In 1937, a church was established in Grand Batanga in the Department of the Ocean through the work of Adalbert Ekitike, R. W. Beach, and Marius Fridlin. In 1940, Ndi Daniel was assigned to work in Metet, and Salomon Olinga Essindi and Marius Fridlin began evangelism in Niamvoudou. Mission stations were opened in Kongo and Azem in 1941. Avebe Station, which became the headquarters of the Center and South Conference, was created in 1944 due to the labor of Emma Mengbwa, Ndi Daniel, Medjo Eyetemou Josué, and Curmaturianus. In 1954, the Yaoundé Station was established by Kurt Scheidegger, and in 1964 the Ebolowa Station was established by Ndi Daniel.

Origins and Development of Adventist Work in the Northern Part of Cameroon

With headquarters in Dogba, the North Cameroon Conference has covered the northern part of Cameroon since its creation in 1933. The church institutions established in Dogba included a primary school opened early in 1934, later officially recognized by the Cameroon government on November 16, 1950; and a medical dispensary officially recognized in 1972, although it opened in 1950. Another primary school began operation on March 21, 1957, in Koza. A hospital also opened in Koza in 1953. In 1972, a secondary school bearing Ruben Bergstrom's name was established in Dogba—the *Collège Adventiste Bergstrom de Dogba*. The conference has added two other institutions: the *Collège Adventiste de Marouaon* established on September 29, 2003, and the *Collège Adventiste de Kozaon* opened on January 6, 2011. An Adventist World Radio studio began broadcasting in the Fulfulde language on March 4, 2007.²

Origins and Development of Adventist Work in the Eastern Part of Cameroon

The East Cameroon Mission was established in 1932, organized in 1949, and reorganized in 1966, 1970, and 1998. The last date marked the detachment of the Upper Sanaga administrative division which was then attached to the Central-South Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The East Cameroon Mission inaugurated its status as a conference during its constituency held March 28-31, 2018.

W. H. Anderson had established the first mission station in Cameroon in Nanga-Eboko in 1926. In 1930, Marius Raspal established the second station in Batouri. That year missionaries Serge Yeretjian and Aimé Sallée came to Cameroon. They trained church members as evangelists, among whom were Ndinga Was Marcel, Baba Simon, and Ngongo Antoine. The members worked as pioneers to establish mission stations. In 1936, Pastor Aimée Sallée established the Ndoumbi mission station, some fifteen kilometers from Bertoua, the capital city of the Eastern Region of Cameroon. Sallée also started a primary school that was run by Charles Cornaz. Later, a training center for lay pastors and an orphanage were established. Sallée passed the leadership of the Ndoumbi mission station to E. Curmatureanu, who in turn was later replaced by Bentz. In 1934, another group of missionaries explored the locality of Bétaré-Oya. Marius Fridlin preached the gospel to the Bakoum people in the north-east of Bertoua. Curmatureanu evangelized the Képérés people and visited the area of Abong-Mbang. In 1944 missionary Paul Benezech preached to the Bobilis. In Batouri, Zaré Yeretjian brought good news to the Kakos and the Mezimés.³

Origins and Development of Adventist Work in the Western Part of Cameroon

The Adventist message first reached Mandjap, a small village in Littoral Region, West Cameroon, in 1946. Maah Timothée, who worked as a medical doctor in Bétaré Oya, Eastern Cameroon, spent his annual leave in his native village of Mandjap. Dr. Maah had previously met some Adventist missionaries in Nanga Eboko and accepted the Adventist faith. He shared his newfound faith with his family members and some residents of Mandjap. Using his influence in the village, he obtained from the village leaders a plot of land on which to build the first Adventist church in West Cameroon.

Later, Pastor Mpfoumi Antoine arrived in Mandjap. He conducted Bible studies of the “Voice of Hope” series with the group of thirteen people that Dr. Maah had started. On December 27, 1947, Paul Benezech conducted the first baptismal ceremony in West Cameroon. The first Adventists of West Cameroon baptized on that day were Mbeng Noé and his wife Ngo Nyengue Françoise, Bong Joseph and his wife Ngo Nkoum Elisabeth, Mpai Philippe and his wife Ngo Yemba Frieda, Ngo Biyak Ruth, Ngo Tina Sophie (wife of Dr. Maah), Gweth Bi Mabbe Gottfried, Ngo Ngoué Rose, Nsemba Simon, Ngo Nanga Léa, and Babe Salomon. All of these new Adventist members were

previously members of the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon. In 1968, the Adventist message reached Bafang, and its Adventist chapel was dedicated in 1970. The mission field of West Cameroon was administratively part of the Southern European Division. This mission field was organized under the name of the Mission of the Atlantic Coast in 1949. Its territory covered the Cameroonian divisions of Nkam, Ocean, Sanaga Maritime, and Wouri. At its inception, the Atlantic Coast Mission had six churches and 403 members.

The work continued to develop throughout Cameroon. Thus, in 1973, four mission stations were added: Bertoua in the Eastern Cameroon Mission, Douala in the West Cameroon Mission, Maroua in the North Cameroon Mission, and Yaoundé in the Central and South Cameroon Mission.

Until 2013, the Cameroon Mission Field was attached to the Central Africa Union Mission. This union was made up of six countries: Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Central African Republic, Chad, and Congo⁴

Birth and Organization of the Cameroon Union Mission

The Cameroon Field was organized as a union mission in 2013. The officers at the time of organization were Valère G. Assembe Minyono, president; Jean Didier Atoh, secretary; and Jean Jean Bone, treasurer⁵

As of January 1, 2022, the Cameroon Union Mission had 122 ordained ministers, fifty-three licensed ministers, 243 credentialed missionaries, 129 licensed missionaries, and 553 other workers. Its educational institutions employed fifty-three workers and the health institutions twelve workers.⁶

Presidents⁷

Central African Union Mission: A. J. de Canel (1949-1951); Aime Henri Cosendai (1952-1969); Edwin Ludescher (1970-1975); Maurice Zehnaker (1976-1980); George Hermans (1981-1985); Roland Joachim (1986-1990); Leonard Newton (1990-1995); Emmanuel Boma (1995-2000); Jean Marie Tchoualeu (2000-2004); Sylvain Ballais (2004-2007); Allah-Ridy Kone (2007-2010); Valère Guillaume Assembe Minyono (2010-2013).

Cameroon Union Mission: Valère Guillaume Assembe Minyono (2013-).

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. Unless stated otherwise, this article draws on the following two sources: S. Eyezo'o, and A. Pokam, *Le Mouvement Adventiste du 7e Jour au Cameroun 60 ans après: 1926-1986*, December 1986, and R. Gerber, *Le mouvement adventiste: origines et développement* (N. p.: Dammarie-les-Lys, Sdt, 1956).
2. North Cameroon Conference Archives, Maroua, Cameroon.
3. East Cameroon Conference Archives, Bertoua, Cameroon.
4. West Cameroon Conference Archives, Boite Postale, Douala, Cameroon.
5. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, "Cameroon Union Mission," accessed February 13, 2022, <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/2014.pdf>.
6. Report of the Cameroon Union Executive Secretary to the Year-End Meeting of 2021, Cameroon Union Mission Archives, Yaounde, Cameroon.
7. Cameroon Union Mission Archives, Yaounde, Cameroon; *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1950-2022), <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/> .

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