



Adventist congregation in city Dushanbe, 1986.
Photo courtesy of D.O. Yunak.

Tajikistan Field

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The Tajikistan Mission was organized in 2002 and changed to a field in 2012.

Territory and Statistics

Period: 2002–2010 (Mission); 2010–

Territory: Tajikistan

Population: 8,831,000

Membership: 227

Churches: 3

Address: Borbad Street 117; 734032 Dushanbe; Tajikistan

Origin of Seventh-day Adventist Work in the Territory

Adventists arrived to Tajikistan in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. For the origin of Adventist work in the territory, see the article on Tajikistan and the earliest church units of which the country was a part.

In 1929 the first Adventists, Ivan and Vasilii Kozminin, were deported to Tajikistan.² Later on, during 1930s, exiled German Adventists organized the first Adventist congregation.

The first Russian-speaking Adventist congregation was organized in 1931 by the efforts of the families of Pavel Zhukov and Vasilii Borisov, who had moved to Tajikistan from Transcaucasia. They were followed by other exiled Adventists. In a short time, Adventist believers, who were officially collective farm workers, started to assemble to conduct worship services.

After being part of the early Russian church units, the territory was part of the Central Asia Mission (1908–1910), the Turkestan Mission (1911–1925), the Central Asian Conference (1926–c. 1930), and—after not being listed for most of the Communist era—the Uzbek-Tadzhik District (1979–1989), the Asian-Caucasian Conference (1989–94), the Central Asia Conference (1994–1998), the Tajikistan Mission (1998–2000), and the Central Asia Conference (2000–2002).

Organizational History

In 1936 Anton Zubkov, who came from Jalal-Abad (Kyrgyzstan), was elected church leader. He took care of the congregation from 1936 through 1940.

In the late 1930s Stalin's repressions hit Tajikistan. Many Adventists were arrested or exiled. After the year 1940 the remaining Adventists settled down in the cities of Hissar Valley: Ordzhonikidzabad (now Vakhdat), Regar (now Tursunzade), and Stalinabad (now Dushanbe). The largest Adventist church was in the city of Hissar. In 1945 Yakov Zhukov was elected its local elder, and in 1946 Pastor Korolev came from Stavropol to serve that church. In 1949 Konstantin Zubkov was elected local elder.

In 1953, by the decision of the All-Union Council of Seventh-day Adventists, K.A. Korolenko was sent to serve Stalinabad. He ordained K. Zubkov and was in charge of denominational work in the Central Asia republics until 1958, when he was arrested and sentenced to eight years of imprisonment.

In 1978 the Asia-Transcaucasia Conference was organized, uniting local churches in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia.

From the late 1960s to 1990s, the Adventist congregations in Tajikistan were served by Pastors David A. Matern, Roman T. Wagner, Artur F. Stele, Jakob G. Schneider, Alexander R. Link, and David A. Grenz.

In December 1991, a new Adventist church building was constructed and dedicated in Dushanbe.

Following the independence of Tajikistan, many Germans and Russians left the country. As a result, the number of Adventists has declined considerably. The Tajikistani Civil War (1992-1997) also accelerated emigration from Tajikistan.

In 1998 the Adventist Church organized the Tajikistan Mission, headed by Vladimir.V. Matryashin. Between 2000 and 2002, the churches in Tajikistan were part of the Central Asia Conference, headed by Rubin R. Ott.

In 2002 the Central Asia Conference was divided into the Kyrgyzstan Conference, the Tajikistan and Uzbekistan Missions, and the Turkmenistan Field.³ The church units all remained part of the Southern Union Conference. The Tajikistan Mission was comprised of the nation of Tajikistan. Its headquarters was at Borbad Street 117, Dushanbe. Membership stood at 745. Initial officers were President Igor P. Vasilchenko, Secretary Andrew G. Dementiev, Treasurer Alexander N. Kovtun, and executive committee members Finis Arturo, Edward A. Dylev, and Zoya I. Gerasimova.⁴

In 2010 the Mission was demoted to a field.⁵

List of Presidents

Asia-Transcaucasia Conference: David P. Kulakov, 1978-1983; Artur F. Stele, 1983-1988; David P. Kulakov, 1989-1994; Robert G. Geibel, 1994-1998, Vladimir V. Matryashin, 1998-2000; Rubin R. Ott, 2000-2002.

Tajikistan Mission: Igor P. Vasilchenko, 2002–2008; Edward A. Dylev, 2009–2010.

Tajikistan Field: Edward A. Dylev, 2010–15; Vasyl G. Skrypkar, 2016; no listing, 2017–.

SOURCES

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Zhukov, A.V. *Istoriya Adventizma v Tadzhikistane*. 1991. Personal archives.

NOTES

1. "Tajikistan Field," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2018), 77.?
2. Gary Land, "Tajikistan," in *Historical Dictionary of Seventh-Day Adventists* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 291.?
3. "Southern Union Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2004), 92–93.?
4. "Tajikistan Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2004), 93.?
5. "Tajikistan Field," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2012), 100.?

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