



Sinaloa Mexican Conference headquarters.

Photo courtesy of Sinaloa Mexican Conference.

Sinaloa Mexican Conference

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Joel Salazar Otañez studied theology at Montemorelos University and has served the church as a district pastor for 32 years. His great-grandfather, Cenobio Salazar, was one of the first Adventists in Eldorado, Sinaloa, making the author a fourth-generation Adventist. He is married to Ana Laura López Angulo and has two sons and three granddaughters. His granddaughters are now the sixth generation of Adventists in the Salazar family.

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

Territory and Statistics

In 2020 Sinaloa Mexican Conference had 80 churches and 12,818 members in a population of 3,341,232. Its territory is the state of Sinaloa. Its office is located at Calle Río Humaya 284 poniente, entre Morelos y Manuel Bonilla, Colonia Guadalupe, Culiacán, Sinaloa, Mexico.¹

Sinaloa Mexican Conference is divided into 18 pastoral districts and two missionary projects. The conference has 38 organized groups, ten ordained pastors, nine licensed pastors, one missionary, six ministerial associates, and three educational employees. It also has one conference church, six conference pastoral houses, nine plots of land for future churches, and one campground.²

Sinaloa, also known as “Mexico’s Breadbasket,” is the most prominent state in Mexico in terms of agriculture and also has the second largest fishing fleet in the country. It is known for its popular styles of music. It is traversed by many rivers, including the Culiacán, Fuerte, and Sinaloa Rivers.³ Sinaloa also has one of the largest railroads in the country, which includes the Ferrocarril Chihuahua al Pacífico, an important railroad system in the northwest section of the country; three international airports located in Culiacán, Mazatlán, and Los Mochis; and two ports located in Mazatlán and Topolobampo.⁴

Institutions

Colegio Niños Héroe was founded in 1963 in Guasave, Sinaloa. It is the oldest school in the conference territory. It offers pre-primary, primary, middle, and secondary education. The school has 265 students, three administrators, 19 teachers, one secretary, and two service employees. It is located at Antonio Norzagaray 85, Colonia Centro, Sinaloa, Mexico. It has a second campus designated for its secondary-level education located at Boulevard Pedro Infante Cruz and Calle Álamos, Colonia San Fernando, Sinaloa, Mexico.⁵

Colegio Culiacán was founded in 1987. It is the largest school in the conference and one of the most important schools in the North Mexican Union Conference. It offers pre-primary, primary, middle, and secondary education. It has 721 students, seven administrators, 55 teachers, five office staff, and seven service staff. It is located at República de Brasil 3245, Infonavit Humaya, Culiacán, Sinaloa.⁶

Colegio Guamúchil was founded in 1991 in Guamúchil, Sinaloa, Mexico. It offers primary, middle, and secondary education. It has 135 students, three administrators, 14 teachers, one secretary, and two service staff. It is located at Eustaquio Buelna 336, Colonia del Évora, Guamúchil, Sinaloa.⁷

Colegio Ahome was founded in 1992 in Los Mochis, Sinaloa. It offers pre-primary, primary, middle, and secondary education. It has 285 students, three administrators, 19 teachers, two office staff, and two service staff. It is located at Prolongación Pascual Álvarez, Colonia Francisco Villa, Los Mochis, Sinaloa.⁸

A campground facility is located in the community of La Campana on Mexican Federal Highway 15 between the cities of Culiacán and Guamúchil. The campground comprises 21 hectares of land. Since the project is still under development, it only has bathroom facilities, a well, a water storage tank that holds 75,000 liters, and ample

space to park cars.

Origin of Adventist Presence in Conference Territory

The origin of the Adventist presence in the state of Sinaloa is unclear. There are few records of the work of the church in this state, unlike the documentation that exists in other states of Mexico. The first Adventists in Sinaloa of which there is any record or memory were located in San Blas, El Fuerte, and Eldorado. The church work later went to Los Mochis. Later, in an unprecedented explosion of spreading the gospel, the church work extended to the rest of the state. For many years Sinaloa was recognized as one of the fields with the greatest growth in Mexico.

In 1912, during the Mexican Revolution, Christian Schultz was known to be the first person to preach the gospel in the state of Sinaloa. He had been a colporteur in the states of Baja California and Sonora. Francisco Yin Cortez was among the first to be baptized in the state of Sinaloa by Pastor Leónides Leyva. That same year, Pastor Leyva visited San Blas to preach the gospel and then returned to his church in Ciudad Obregón, Sonora. In February 1932, when Yin Cortez had to return to his hometown of San Blas due to his mother's death, he found several believers. Among them were Conchita de Leor, Socorro Ruíz, Martina, and Avelino and his wife. That year Arcadio Valenzuela was appointed pastor of the new church. He was the first Adventist pastor in Sinaloa. In 1936 construction began on the first church building in that town.

Between 1932 and 1935 Pastor Florentino B. Zaynos preached the word of God at the sugar cane mill in Eldorado, Sinaloa, and there the second congregation in the state was formed. At the end of 1938, Pastor Cleófas R. Valenzuela baptized in Eldorado the first group of Adventists formed by the families of Cenobio Salazar, his son, Eliseo Salazar, and his wife, Ángela López; the Pérez family; the Mariscal family; the Cuevas family; and others. In 1939 the second Adventist church in Sinaloa was built. Pastors Florentino Zaynos and Cleófas R. Valenzuela were the pioneer pastors in this and many other towns in the states of Sinaloa and Sonora.⁹

Around 1941 Heriberta Briones left her hometown to move to Los Mochis, where she bought some land to set up a diner. People went there to eat and to drink beer, and Heriberta played a radio program every afternoon that most people liked: *La Voz de la Esperanza*. Little by little her customers grew more interested in the study of the Bible. One day they decided to write a letter to the address announced on the radio. They received a response from the radio program which told them that a pastor would be sent to study the Bible with them. Pacific Mexican Mission, which was in charge of the church work in that region of the country, sent Pastor Cleófas R. Valenzuela to study the Bible with a group of interested people in Los Mochis. After studying the Bible with them, Pastor Valenzuela baptized the first group of Adventists. The group included Heriberta Briones, the owner of the diner; Estanislao Briones and his wife, Isabel; and Mariano Bojórquez and his wife, Maria Luisa. These five new converts were the ones who initiated the work that would illuminate northern Sinaloa with the

Adventist message.

Among those who were baptized, Mariano Bojórquez had a missionary spirit. Since he worked selling American clothes and other articles from his truck throughout the towns surrounding Los Mochis, he named and labeled his truck *La Voz de la Esperanza*. This way he sold products while at the same time preaching the gospel.

In 1945 personal circumstances caused Mariano Bojórquez to move to the city of Guamúchil, where he used the same methods to share the gospel with Mauricio Chávez and his wife, Antonia Durán; Dionisio Camacho and his wife, Catalina Sánchez; and Pablo Rodríguez. They were baptized by Pastor Cleófas R. Valenzuela. These were the pioneers who initiated the Adventist work in the city of Guamúchil.¹⁰

In 1946 Mariano Bojórquez moved to the city of Guasave with Beto Espinoza because he had an uncle, Belén López, with whom he could live. That place was known as *Rincón de los López* (now Colonia Ángel Flores). There he shared the gospel with the López and González families from La Florida, Guasave. Months later he shared the gospel with three people who became very well-known evangelists in the region: Jorge Ramírez, Rogelio Castro, and Jesús López Rodelo. They joined forces and established groups and churches in almost every town in the municipality of Guasave. As a result, this municipality came to have the largest membership and the most churches in the region.

In 1959 Guasave Central Church was inaugurated. It was the first large church in the state with a capacity of 120 people. In 1964 the first church in the city of Los Mochis was built. It had a capacity of more than 300 people and was the largest church in the state at that time.

In the state capital, Culiacán, one of the pioneers was Pastor Venancio Salazar, who was sent there to establish the work of the church. There were already a few believers in Culiacán who met at the pastor's house. From Culiacán, Pastor Salazar also served the church of Eldorado. In 1966 a plot of land was bought on which the largest church in Sinaloa was built. It was inaugurated on January 31, 1970, with 70 baptized members and a capacity for more than 300 people.¹¹

Organization of Conference

Northwest Mexican Conference created Sinaloa Mission in 2002 with Gabriel Velázquez Cárdenas as its president. By the time the yearbook recognized the mission in 2005, Luis Armando García was recognized as its president.¹² In 2007 Sinaloa Mission changed its status to Sinaloa Mexican Conference.¹³ In its first quadrennial session in August 2011, Héctor Hernández Maya was elected president.¹⁴ In its second quadrennial session in August 2015, Francisco Pérez Flores was elected president.¹⁵

Conference Plans to Fulfill its Mission

To make every church a center of influence to promote health and hope.

To have faithfulness and loyalty to God and His Church and to involve the Adventist youth in leadership and evangelism.

To recruit colporteurs to evangelize the southern part of the state.

To have spirituality in all families through daily family worship.

To have more church members involved in evangelism through missionary couples and small groups.

To train young people as volunteer missionaries.

To properly qualify every pastor and have them experience a united and spiritual family.

To duly regularize and register every church building and property.

To have a good relationship with civil and educational authorities by being trained in the nation's religious liberty laws.

To continue the building and development of the conference campground.

To provide effective pastoral care to church members for the proclamation of the gospel throughout the conference territory until Christ's soon return.¹⁶

List of Presidents

Gabriel Velázquez Cárdenas (2002-2004); Luis Armando García (2004-2011); Héctor Hernández Maya (2011-2015); Francisco Pérez Flores (2015-2019).

SOURCES

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NOTES

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