



Comayagüela Conference, Honduras.  
Photo courtesy of Honduras Union Mission.

# Honduras Comayagüela Conference

---

## DANIEL CHACON AGUILAR

Daniel Chacon Aguilar, B.Th. (Universidad Adventista Dominicana, Villa Sonador, Dominican Republic), has served as a district pastor and education board member of Northwest Honduras Conference. He is married to Rosalina Sánchez and has a son.

---

Honduras Comayagüela Conference is a part of Honduras Union Mission. Its headquarters are located in Colonia El Prado, Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Its activities are governed by principles based on the model constitution of the Inter-American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The territory of Honduras Comayagüela Conference is comprised of the departments of Choluteca, Valle, and El Paraíso, and a part of Francisco Morazán, which includes the municipalities of Lepaterique, La Libertad, Alubaren, La Venta, Ojojona, San Buenaventura, Maraita, San Antonio de Oriente, Curaren, San Miguelito, Reitoca, Sabanagrande, Santa Ana, Nueva Armenia, and Tatumbula.<sup>1</sup>

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Statistical Report of 2018 indicates that Honduras Comayagüela Conference had 93 churches and 54 groups. The first quarter of 2019 showed 25,421 members, 18 district pastors, 62 employees in the education sector, and seven office staff for a total of 86 active employees.<sup>2</sup>

### Origins and Development of Honduras Comayagüela Conference

Before Honduras Comayagüela Conference was created, its territory was part of Honduras Continental Adventist Mission, the largest field of Mid-Central American Union Mission, comprising of Honduras and El Salvador among its territory. In 2008, Pastor Alfredo Argueta, president of Mid-Central American Union Mission, thought it necessary to divide this field. He asked Pastor Adán Ramos, president of Honduras Continental Mission, to restructure the territory to form two fields, taking into account the departments of Valle and Choluteca forming an experimental mission in the southern part of the country.<sup>3</sup>

Since the southern area of the country had been an economically depressed sector, the idea was for the mother field to subsidize this new territory for five years. In the first year, the new mission would receive a monthly subsidy of \$10,000 USD, which would increase by ten percent each year until the five-year period was completed, when the new field would be able to survive on its own.<sup>4</sup>

Pastor Ramos considered that a new field had to exist from day one with the ability to sustain itself. He asked Pastor Argueta for more time to examine the various financial scenarios and present a stronger proposal. Pastor Ramos asked Brother Marvin Scott, secretary-treasurer of the continental mission, to conduct three financial studies, or ways to possibly divide the field. The first study took into account the departments of Valle and Choluteca as originally suggested by the union president. The second included only the department of Olancho, the largest in Honduras. The third study took into account the central departments of Comayagua, La Paz, and Intibucá.<sup>5</sup>

After the studies were concluded and analyzed by Pastor Ramos and Brother Scott, they concluded that, in all three scenarios, subsidies would be required to operate any new fields. The administrators did not want to create a dependent field, so they then worked to conduct a fourth financial study. The capital of Honduras was formed by two twin cities, Tegucigalpa and Comayagüela, which together formed what was called the central district in the department of Francisco Morazán. This new study aimed to separate the two cities so that each one could serve as a headquarters, one for the mother field and the other for the experimental field. Territories were added to both fields, balancing the number of churches and allowing both fields to operate independent of each other. So, the department of Francisco Morazán was split in two, and the new experimental mission received the departments of Valle, Choluteca, and El Paraíso. It became necessary to attach the churches of Villanueva District in Tegucigalpa as a loan.<sup>6</sup>

With this fourth study, the budgets matched perfectly so that both fields could be self-sustainable. This experimental mission project gained a proposed name: "Honduras Southeast Mission." Upon receiving the new proposal, the union accepted it.<sup>7</sup>

A union board meeting was called on October 1, 2008, and the creation of a new region was voted.<sup>8</sup> A region is similar to a mission, but it favored the new field, requiring it to send a lower percentage of tithes with the intent of strengthening the new field in its beginnings. The new region was named "Honduras Southeast Region." Pastor Winston Simpson, Mid-Central American Union Mission Ministerial, was appointed president with Miss Nineth Miranda, secretary-treasurer of Salvador Paracentral Mission, as secretary-treasurer of the new region.<sup>9</sup> The region began operations on January 2, 2009, with 60 churches, 48 groups, and 54,540 members.<sup>10</sup> Shortly after, David Gale, who had been the Mid-Central American Union Mission accountant, replaced Miranda.<sup>11</sup>

At the end of 2011, Pastor Simpson accepted a call to work in the United States, and the union board appointed Pastor Eddy Bonilla, a Costa Rican national working in San Pedro Sula, as president of the Honduras Southeast Region.<sup>12</sup>

At the mid-year meetings in May 19-22, 2014, the Inter-American Division received the request of the Honduras Union Mission to change the status of Honduras Southeast Region to a mission. When Pastor Elie Henry, division secretary, reviewed his records, he could not find any previous vote for the creation of Honduras Southeast Region and indicated that the region had been functioning without official approval from the division. On the island of Curacao in October 25-29, 2014, at the Inter-American Division year-end meetings, the restructuring of Central Honduras Conference was officially voted, officially creating Honduras Southeast Region.<sup>13</sup>

When Honduras Union Mission presented the point to the division in May 2014, it was with the intent that, before the end of the year, a restructuring would be carried out, and the building intended for the headquarters would be dedicated then, although it was still being remodeled. Pastor Bonilla had been searching for a property to serve as the headquarters for the region since they had been renting a property until then. The first rented property was in the El Prado neighborhood, and the headquarters moved to a property in the same neighborhood belonging to ADRA Honduras.<sup>14</sup>

Engineer Manuel Flores, a brother from a church in Tegucigalpa, brought news of an office-style building for sale that could serve as the new headquarters for the region. Aside from the building, the sale included an attached vacant lot. The owners did not want to sell the properties separately; their condition for the sale was both or neither, which was favorable to the field administrators, who wanted both. Negotiations were carried out in the region headquarters in the El Prado neighborhood. President Eddy Bonilla, Secretary-Treasurer David Gale, Union President Adán Ramos, Manuel Flores, and two representatives of the owners negotiated the sale of the property. The final purchase was set at \$120,000 USD.<sup>15</sup>

When the Mid-Central American Union Mission decided to create the experimental mission in 2008, contribution values were established for the new offices: from the mother field, \$40,000 USD; from the Mid-Central American Union Mission, \$40,000 USD; and from the new field, \$40,000 USD. Thus, dividing the purchase price by three was easy. The Mid-Central American Union Mission no longer existed when the purchase was made, so the new Honduras Union Mission participated with its own \$40,000 USD, and the property was acquired. Once the purchase was made, the property had to be remodeled. The cost of remodeling exceeded \$110,000 USD, so the union added an additional contribution of \$50,000 USD, and the region paid the remainder. The building was ready in November 2014.<sup>16</sup>

On November 12, 2014, the second congress of Central Honduras Conference met and ratified the vote to reorganize the field. Pastor Israel Leito, president of the division, attended the event. On November 13, the new offices of

Honduras Southeast Region were dedicated.<sup>17</sup>

The territory of Honduras Southeast Region was comprised of the departments of Choluteca, Valle, and El Paraíso and part of Francisco Morazán, including the following municipalities: Lepaterique, La Libertad, Alubaren, La Venta, Ojojona, San Buenaventura, Maraita, San Antonio de Oriente, Curaren, San Miguelito, Reitoca, Sabanagrande, Santa Ana, Nueva Armenia, and Tatumbla. In addition, Central District was divided from the southern side of Rio Hombre in Amarateca and the junction of Rio Grande or Choluteca in the south, to the limits of the municipality of San Buenaventura and Santa Ana.<sup>18</sup>

On November 16, 2015, the Honduras Union Mission year-end meetings took place, and the General Conference presented the request to no longer use cardinal points in the names of new local fields.<sup>19</sup> Two votes were taken at that meeting. The first was to request the division to change the status of the region to a mission. The second was to request the change of name for the new mission by considering the request of the General Conference. The new name became Honduras Comayagüela Mission.<sup>20</sup>

In March 1-2, 2016, the session for the change of status from region to mission took place. Once again, Pastor Israel Leito, president of the Inter-American Division, conducted the ceremony at the Retreat Center in Valle de Angeles. Javier Mejia was appointed president with Juan Carlos Raudales as secretary and Santos Israel Zambrano as treasurer.<sup>21</sup>

At the end of 2018, the Honduras Union Mission administration saw the need to unify all its congress sessions and requested the division to allow them to initiate this process. The division's new president, Pastor Elie Henry, supported the request. August 2019 was set as the month to conduct all congress sessions. At once, it was requested for Honduras Comayagüela Mission to be included to have its own congress and to change its status and become a conference, just like the rest of the fields in Honduras. It was the only mission that remained in Honduras, but it was not the weakest field; at the time, there were two stronger and two weaker conferences.<sup>22</sup>

On July 15, 2019, a special Inter-American Division survey commission analyzed the proposed status change and recommended to the board of the division, which was to meet a day later, to accept the recommendation of Honduras Union Mission to change the status of Honduras Comayagüela Mission to a conference. The Inter-American Division Executive Committee voted on July 16, 2019, to grant conference status to the mission.<sup>23</sup> The session to change the mission's status to a conference was set for August 12, 2019. The ceremony for Honduras Comayagüela Conference took place at the Maranatha Retreat Center in Valle de Angeles with Elie Henry, president of the Inter-American Division; Tomas Torres, vice-president of the Inter-American Division; Saul Ortíz, president of the Inter-American Division Publishing House; administrators of Honduras Union Mission; and regular and general delegates present.

## Honduras Comayagüela Conference Institutions

Choluteca Adventist Ideal Educational Center

Choluteca Adventist Ideal Educational Center is located in Choluteca in southern Honduras. It began in 1972 with the opening of a primary school under the management of Pastor José Alberto Morán.<sup>24</sup> At the beginning, it operated from the pastoral house at the Adventist church in the El Tamarindo neighborhood with 11 students, one teacher, and a director, Vilma Mendoza de Ordonez.<sup>25</sup>

In 1993, a kindergarten level was opened under the administration of Pastor Esau Delarca with Raquel Maldonado de Delarca as teacher and director.<sup>26</sup> In 1994, Professor Norma García, director of the elementary school, attempted to obtain a permit to offer secondary education but was unsuccessful. This permit to offer secondary education was approved the following year, and, in 1996, the institute began operating a secondary level with 65 students. Professor David García Morán was appointed as general director.<sup>27</sup>

Between 1998-1999, a second floor and nine classrooms were added. This enabled the offering of bachelors' (secondary level) of science, arts, and commercial education. In 2000, "bilingual secretariat" was opened, but only three students graduated with the degree. By 2007, the institution had 875 students.<sup>28</sup>

In 2008, the school was evaluated, and the parents urged for new facilities so students could better develop. The institution then acquired a large property. Pastor José Alberto Morán negotiated the purchase, and Pastor Adán Ramos made the acquisition in favor of the mission. In 2009, while visiting the Mid-Central American Union Mission headquarters in Tegucigalpa, the president of Maranatha International Volunteers made an offer to Pastor Ramos to construct two schools and 60 one-day temples. Since there was already a new administration in the Honduras Southeast Region, and since Pastor Ramos was the president of Central Honduras Mission, he asked Norma García, director of the Choluteca institute, about her interest in this project. The answer was positive. He then called Pastor Winston Simpson, president of Southeast Honduras Mission, to ask him about his interest in the project. Because they both agreed, Pastor Ramos confirmed with Maranatha the approval for this new project in Choluteca and another in Valle de Angeles.<sup>29</sup>

In 2010, even though the property to build the new school had been paid for in full, Pastor Simpson had it sold to purchase a bigger one in a better location. The new property exceeded \$340,000 USD. Maranatha helped with the construction, but the construction and this change of property led the institution into a difficult financial situation. The field and union had to help the institution deal with its debts, which exceeded \$1,000,000 USD.<sup>30</sup>

The construction took place near the end of 2010 through all 2011. Maranatha executives indicated that this was the

biggest construction project they had up to then. During the construction, Professor Norma García was the principal with Héctor Oliva as the manager. The new facilities were ready for operations in 2012, although construction had not been completely finished.<sup>31</sup>

In 2018, under the direction of Brother José Luís Rosales, some improvements were made to the infrastructure and landscaping, and three courts were roofed. As of 2019, the institution had 500 students in the Spanish education system and 50 in the bilingual education system.<sup>32</sup>

#### Maranatha Kindergarten and School

Maranatha Kindergarten and School is located in Colonia El Zarzal, Danli, El Paraíso. Its beginnings are linked to the request that Pastor Esau Del Arca and his wife, Raquel Maldonado, received from members who wanted their children to be taught in an Adventist educational system.<sup>33</sup> In 1998, a property was purchased, and construction began without debt. On December 21, 1998, the church in Danli requested to open the school and was approved.<sup>34</sup> Operations began with 250 students in pre-basic and basic education.<sup>35</sup>

In 2010, the Maranatha Adventist Institute began offering secondary education with 36 students. The pre-basic and basic levels were taught in the mornings, and the secondary level was taught in the afternoons.<sup>36</sup> Due to academic requirements, a bachelor (secondary level) of science and humanities was offered in 2014. A change to the bilingual education system at the basic education levels was gradually achieved.<sup>37</sup> As of 2019, the institution had 162 students in the three levels of education (pre-school, elementary, and secondary levels), including the bachelor of science and humanities, with 15 teachers in two different schedules.<sup>38</sup>

## List of Presidents

Winston Simpson (2009-2011); Eddy Bonilla (2011-2015); Javier Mejia (2015-2019); Olger Villalobos (2019- ).

### SOURCES

Central Honduras Mission Board minutes. December 21, 1998. Central Honduras Conference archives. Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Garcia, Norma. "History Adventist Ideal Educational Center." Unpublished. March 25, 2019.

Honduras Union Mission Board minutes. September 2, 2014. Honduras Union Mission archives. Tegucigalpa, D.C., Honduras.

Honduras Union Mission Board minutes. November 16, 2015. Honduras Union Mission archives. Tegucigalpa, D.C., Honduras.

Inter-American Division Executive Committee minutes. July 16, 2019. 19-16. Secretariat archives. Miami, Florida.

Mejia, Esdras. "Brief History of the Institution." Unpublished. March 11, 2019.

Mid-Central American Union Mission Board minutes. October 1, 2008. Central Honduras Conference archives. Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. Accessed May 29, 2019.

<http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB2017.pdf>.

### NOTES

1. "Honduras Union Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, accessed May 29, 2019, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB2017.pdf>; and Honduras Union Mission Board, September 2, 2014, 0082, 075-2014, Honduras Union Mission archives.?
2. Juan Carlos Raudales, interview by author, Comayagüela, Central District, May 29, 2019.?
3. Adán Ramos, interview by author, Central Honduras Conference headquarters, May 28, 2019.?
4. Ibid.?
5. Ibid.?
6. Ibid.?
7. Ibid.?
- 8.



- Mid-Central American Union Mission Board, October 1, 2008, 25, 079-08, Central Honduras Conference archives.?
9. Ibid., 080-08.?
  10. Irma Estrada, interview by author, Honduras Comayagüela Mission headquarters, May 28, 2019.?
  11. Ibid.?
  12. Adán Ramos, interview by author, Central Honduras Conference headquarters, May 28, 2019.?
  13. Ibid.?
  14. Ibid.?
  15. Ibid.?
  16. Ibid.?
  17. Ibid.?
  18. "Honduras Union Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, accessed May 29, 2019.  
<http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB2017.pdf>?
  19. Honduras Union Mission Board, November 16, 2015, 0062, 117-2015, Honduras Union Mission archives.?
  20. Ibid.?
  21. Adán Ramos, interview by author, Central Honduras Conference, May 28, 2019.?
  22. Ibid.?
  23. Inter-American Division Executive Committee, July 16, 2019, 19-16, secretariat archives.?
  24. Norma Garcia, "History Adventist Ideal Educational Center," unpublished, March 25, 2019.?
  25. Ibid.?
  26. Raquel Maldonado, interview by author, Tegucigalpa, May 28, 2019.?
  27. Garcia, March 25, 2019.?
  28. Ibid.?
  29. Adán Ramos, interview by author, Central Honduras Conference, May 28, 2019.?
  30. Ibid.?
  31. Ibid.?
  32. Garcia, March 25, 2019.?
  33. Raquel Maldonado, interview by author, Tegucigalpa, May 28, 2019.?
  34. Central Honduras Mission Board, December 21, 1998, 001, 66-98, Central Honduras Conference archives.?
  35. Raquel Maldonado, interview by author, Tegucigalpa, May 28, 2019.?
  36. Esdras Mejía, "Brief History of the Institution," unpublished, March 11, 2019.?
  37. Ibid.?
  38. Ibid.?

