

Central African Republic Mission

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Central African Republic Mission is a part of Central African Union Mission in the West-Central Africa Division of Seventh-day Adventists. It was established in 1960 and reorganized in 1970. Its headquarters is in Bangui, Central African Republic.

Territory: Central African Republic.

Statistics (June 30, 2020): Churches, 52; membership, 6,337; population, 4,830,000.¹

Background

Central African Republic Mission was originally part of the old Central African Union Mission, which included Cameroon. In 2013, Cameroon became a separate union, then Central Africa Republic Mission and four other fields (Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Congo) formed a new union. The mission was established in 1960 and reorganized in 1970.² The pioneering work was done by Jean Kempf and his wife, and in 1970, when the mission was organized, he became the first director of the Central African Republic Mission Station.

The Central Africa Republic is a landlocked country in Central Africa. It is bordered by Chad to the north, Sudan to the northeast, South Sudan to the East, the Democratic Republic of Congo to the South, the Republic of Congo to the southwest, and Cameroon to the West. The Central African Republic Mission covers a land area of about 620,000 square kilometers and an estimated population of around 4,745,000 as of 2019. As of June 30, 2020, the Central African Republic Mission had 52 churches, with a membership of 6,337 members.³

The Pioneer Movement in the Mission

The Adventist message came to the Central African Republic on January 14 1960, through Jean Kempf and his wife. Once in Bangui, they devoted their time to the gospel ministry and reached out through printed pages. Later in 1960, not only a school was opened, but also a group of 34 people was studying the Bible with Pastor Kempf. That year seven people were baptized and sent to spread the gospel message.⁴

In 1961, four branch Sabbath Schools opened in the country: on January 14 in Bangui, on April 8 in Alindao, and on December 31 in Sika, each having an average of 5 regular members. Another Sabbath School section opened

January 2, 1962 in Koukouma-Ngaza. As a result of these efforts, the Central African Republic mission had 251 baptized members by 1963.

In 1968 Manuel Martorell and his family brought the Adventist message to Zima in the eastern part of the country. In 1971, Jules Agasson with his wife and two daughters, carried the evangelistic work to Bouar.

Creation of Central African Mission

Eventually the pioneer missionary work got the attention of the church administration in Cameroon, Yaoundé, where was located the headquarters of what was then called the Equatorial African Union Mission.⁵ Executive Secretary-Treasurer Raymond Collin, proposed that the country should be organized as a mission station. Union President Edwin Ludescher proposed the official organization of the country as a mission station.⁶ Jean Kempf, who was a member of that executive committee and director of the missionary work in the Central African Republic, was elected to be the director of the mission station, with Clement Colongondat as secretary and Raymond Collin as acting treasurer.

The first executive committee of the Central African Mission was composed of Jean Kempf as the chairman; Clement Colongondat; Joachim Gbiatimbi; Bernard Kando; Manuel Martorell; Emile Mboutou; and Joseph Outo. Only three departmental offices were occupied: lay activities and Sabbath School, temperance, and the youth.

In 1972, the first person to hold the title of president of the mission was Manuel Martorell, with Jules Agasson as secretary and Raymond Collin as treasurer. The mission had five churches and 439 members.⁷ By 1980 membership was 989 people, with five churches.⁸

Territory and Membership

When the Central African Mission was organized in 1970, church membership was around 335, with many people attending Sabbath school groups.⁹ The mission comprised the Bangui, Berberati, and Mobaye districts. The work force included two ordained ministers, Jean Kempf, and Manuel Martorell; licensed ministers Clement Colongondat and Bernard Kando; and two licensed missionaries, Mrs. Jean Kempf, and Mrs. Manuel Martorell!¹⁰

Membership of the mission in 1990 was 1,897, with Marc D. Cools as president. The mission had 41 churches with four ordained ministers: Patrice Bagaza, Marc D. Cools, Joachim Gbiatimbi, and Michel Gopa; and ten licensed ministers: Pierre Azougama, Elie Boromia, Jean Pierre Dalikouba, Philippe Mbaouba, Etienne Narke, Victor Tagoe, Pierre Tekata, David Wambeti, Valere Yamboe, and Antoine Zengba.¹¹

The headquarters of the missionary work was at the house of Jean Kempf when it was established in 1960. When the mission was formally organized the headquarters moved to Bangui, the capital of the country. It was located at the field that was bought by Jean Kempf.

Administrators

Director: Jean Kempf, 1963-1971

Presidents: Manuel Martorell, 1972-1976; Jules Agasson, 1978-1981; Ulirch Ottschofski, 1982-1987; Hans Obenaus, 1988-1989; Marc D. Cools, 1990-1994; Jules Messambou, 1997-1998; Andre Ndoumou Samba, 1999-2003; Paul Klavac, 2004-2009; Jean Jacques Gueret, 2013-2015; Elie Boromia, 2016- 2019; Ndombeth Emeryc Abib, 2020-

Secretaries: Clement Colongondat, 1970-1971; Jules Agasson, 1972-1978; Walter Zoa (Acting), 1998-2004; J. J. Gueret, 2005-2006; Elie Ouazounam, 2007-2015; Ngo Pepniemb Lafortune, 2015-2018; Ndombeth Emeryc Abib, 2018-2019; Milandou Stephanie, 2020-

Treasurers: Raymond Collin, 1970-1980; Manuel Marinheiro, 1980-1987; Walter Zoa (Acting), 1998-2004; J. J. Gueret, 2005-2006; Elie Ouazounma, 2007-2015; Ngo Pepniemb Lafortune, 2015-2018; Denemandji Rock Saurel, 2018-2019; Milandou Stephanie, 2020-

SOURCES

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

NOTES

1. "Central African Republic Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2021), <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=10157>.
2. "Central African Republic," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2020), 382.
3. Ibid.
4. Philippe Meliandou, retired pastor from Congo Mission, interviewed by the author, Bangui, Central African Republic, 28 April 2017.
5. "Central African Republic," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1970), 251.
6. Antoine Zengba, retired pastor from Central African Republic, interviewed by the author, Central African Republic, April 28, 2018.
7. "Central African Republic," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1972), 130.
8. "Central African Republic," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1980), 163.
9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Central African Republic," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1990), 38.

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