



North Zimbabwe Conference headquarters.

Photo courtesy of Obert Nyahwa Mudzengi.

North Zimbabwe Conference

OBERT NYAHWA MUDZENGI

Obert Nyahwa Mudzengi, D.Min.

(Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan) is currently serving as publishing director of the Zimbabwe East Union Conference. He is also the ASI Coordinator and acting ABC Manager. He previously served as the first president of the North Zimbabwe Conference and, prior to that, he was a lecturer at Solusi University. During his university study years, he was always on the Dean's List, graduating as the overall best student of his class.

The North Zimbabwe Conference is a subsidiary church administrative unit in the Zimbabwe East Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists located in Africa.

Current Territory and Statistics

The North Zimbabwe Conference (NZC) was organized in December 2014. It was formerly part of the East Zimbabwe Conference, which was then under the Zimbabwe Union Conference. It now falls under the Zimbabwe East Union Conference since the Union territorial realignment in November 2017. The territory of NZC consists of the Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West provinces as well as portions of the City of Harare and Mashonaland East Province.¹ As of June 30, 2021, its membership stood at 167,101 out of a

population of 3,316,768 in 458 churches. The NZC is administered from 468 Sandton Park, Mt. Hampden, Zvimba. Zimbabwe.²

Origins of Adventist Work in the Territory of the Conference

The watershed for the origins of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zimbabwe is the Solusi Mission, which is now known as Solusi University, and is located in the Matebeleland North Province.³ Solusi Mission was established in 1894. Melvin C. Sturdevant, an American Adventist missionary, was dispatched from Solusi to pioneer the establishment of the church in eastern Zimbabwe.⁴ He established the Nyazura Mission in 1910. The fruits of his missionary labors, in later years, led to the establishment of what is now the East Zimbabwe Conference, from which the North Zimbabwe Conference was born.⁵ The NZC came into existence after a territorial realignment organizing session in December 2014.⁶

The realignment was done because of the increase of church members in the East Zimbabwe Conference. Since the organization of the NZC, membership has continued to increase steadily. In 2015, the Conference membership stood at 140,368, later surging to 152,050 in 2016. This steady growth in membership has continued as follows: 157,152 in 2017; 162,563 in 2018; 163,337 in 2019; and 167,243 in 2020.⁷

The continued rise in church membership can be attributed to the “Total Membership Involvement” initiative, running under the watchwords, “One Member, One Soul.” There has been a big emphasis on small group ministries. The evangelistic outreach is further boosted by the presence of several “Centers of Influence” in the form of educational institutions. The Conference administers 17 schools, including 10 primary schools and seven secondary schools. Three of these schools have boarding facilities.

Future Prospects

The North Zimbabwe Conference is eagerly planning to also establish healthcare institutions. The pioneering work in this is to be through the establishment of Mauya Clinic, which is already in the pipeline. There are many opposing factors on the ground, chief among them is the economic meltdown. This has driven the majority of the Zimbabwean populace into abysmal poverty, enduring a high cost of living and unemployment.⁸ The church has not been spared from these challenges. The income of the Conference has been on the decline. The rapid growth in membership has not been matched with an equal increase in the tithe income. This has, however, drastically increased the pastor membership ratio. Nevertheless, the church is still operational, and its survival can only be attributed to the miraculous providence of God.

List of Presidents

Obert Nyahwa Mudzengi (2014-2017); Albert Noah Mangwende (2018-2019); Enoch Chifamba (2020-2021);
Oswell Dzvairo (2021-present).

SOURCES

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1. North Zimbabwe Conference Constitution and By-laws, 2021, North Zimbabwe Conference Archives, 468 Sandton Park, Mt. Hampden, Zvimba.
2. "North Zimbabwe Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2021), Accessed September 9, 2022. <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=53022>.
3. Paminus Machamire, "East Zimbabwe Conference." *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*. January 29, 2020. Accessed September 9, 2022. <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=8CCX>.
4. "Rhodesia," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*. Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996, 1216.
5. Lloyd Tambama, "Sturdevant, Melvin C. (1865–1933)." *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*. January 29, 2020. Accessed September 9, 2022. <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=DCD8>.
6. Realignment Session Committee Minutes at Nyazura Adventist High School, 2014, North Zimbabwe Conference Archives, 2 Princess Drive, Newlands, Harare, Zimbabwe.

7. North Zimbabwe Conference Secretariat Statistical Reports, 2015-2021, North Zimbabwe Conference Archives, 2 Princess Drive, Newlands, Harare, Zimbabwe.

8. Leonard Chitongo, Prince Chikunya, and Timothy Marango, "Do Economic Blueprints Work? Evaluating the Prospects and Challenges of Zimbabwe's Transitional Stabilization Programme," *African Journal of Governance & Development* 9, no. 1 (August 17, 2020): 7-20.

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