

Valley Mexican Mission

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The Valley Mexican Mission is one of the local fields of the Central Mexican Union Mission. The Valley Mexican Mission's territory includes 67 administrative districts in the southern part of the state of Mexico, 11 in the northern part of the state of Guerrero, and one in the state of Michoacán.

As of 2019, the area was home to 4,870,546 people,² among whom were 12,784 Seventh-day Adventists meeting in 50 organized churches and 56 companies. The mission operated one school and employed nine ordained and six licensed ministers.

The office is located at: José María Pino Suárez # 86, Col. Santa Ana Tlapaltitlán, Toluca, Edo. de México, C.P. 50160. The mission is part of the Central Mexican Union Mission and is located within the territory of the Inter-American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Educational Institution

Valley Mexican Mission operates the Manuel M. Ponce Institute, located at Avenida Adolfo López Mateos # 542, Colonia San Salvador Tizatlali, Metepec, México, 52172. The school was established in 1988 in the Santa Ana Tlapaltitlán church building. The first director was David Rivera Camacho. Martha Alicia Bocanegra Nuncio and Israel Galeana García were the teachers. The Manuel M. Ponce Institute currently offers four basic levels of education: preschool, primary, middle school, and secondary school. The number of students has varied, from 100 to 280 students. In 2019 there were 148 students in the four different levels.³

Origins of the Adventist Work in the Territory

In 1925 Alfred Cooper arrived from Mexico City to distribute Adventist books and literature in the city of Toluca. While doing this work, he met Perfecto Aguilar and his wife Virginia Maya, who eventually accepted the Adventist message.⁴

At first the congregation met on Sabbath at 32 Lerdo Street, in the home of the Aguilar family. Later, Sabino Reyes joined the group. In 1926, Francisco González Lara and his wife Luz Cuenca arrived in San Lorenzo

Tepaltitlán, following their trade as artisans. They were evangelized by Virginia Maya. Luz Cuenca first accepted the gospel and later she was joined by her husband, Francisco González.⁵

In 1929, in Tierra Caliente, Arcelia, Guerrero, Pastor Juan Pérez conducted a series of meetings. One day while the pastor was on his way to the Arcelia market, he met two traveling merchants who had arrived from Toluca to sell their products. They were Sixto Rivera and Gabino Crisanto. The pastor invited them to his meetings. They had to leave before the conclusion of the meetings, but the pastor told them that in Toluca they could continue studying with the group that met on Saturdays at 32 Lerdo Street. Upon returning to Toluca, they and their families began attending the church.

In 1930, Sixto Rivera invited his uncle, Alejandro Rivera Chota, to meet with them and Macaria Rivera Estrada. In 1936, Francisco Sánchez and Sebastián Ortega met with the believers. At the latter's house, they met for a period of two years. Colporteur Roberto Monsalvo visited them and suggested that they should be organized and recognized by the mission as a company. Pastor Emiliano Ponce baptized María Florencia and her children Manuel, Sebastián, Eutimio, María, and Hilario Martínez, in the early 1930s.⁶

In 1937, Sixto Rivera and his wife María de Jesús Santillán donated the land that is today occupied by the church of Santa Ana Tlapaltitlán. It is located in Díaz Mirón and José Ma. Pino Suárez # 3, col. Santa Ana Tlapaltitlán, Toluca de Lerdo, Mexico.⁷

Events that Led to the Organization of the Mission

The Mexican Mission was founded in 1903. Its first president was Pastor George M. Brown.⁸ The treasurer was Pastor George W. Caviness and secretary was Alfred Cooper. The office was located at 22nd Avenue, No. 1500, 1500, Tacubaya, D, F.

From the beginning, the pioneers who arrived in Mexico to establish the Mexican Mission decided to set up a publishing house with the plan of publishing magazines and books to spread the gospel message. They soon discovered that Mexican law required that they organize a legal society for carrying on this activity. Therefore, they incorporated the Truth Publications Company.⁹

Unfortunately, during the maelstrom of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917), the publishing house, the Prosperity Commercial Institute Adventist College, and almost all the members of the church sank into the darkness of that great catastrophe. There was a time, in the darkest hour of the revolution, when all missionaries left Mexico on the advice of their governments, and only Pastor George W. Caviness and his wife remained in Mexico. During the years 1917 to 1920, to keep the mission alive, Pastor Caviness served concurrently as president, secretary, and treasurer of the Mexican Mission.¹⁰

Until 1917, the Mexican Mission was under the direct administration of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. In 1918 the North Latin-American Union Mission was organized and the Mexican Mission was

attached to it, together with the missions of Cuba, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, and Venezuela.¹¹ As part of the effort to organize and manage the broad territory of this mission, an adjustment was made to form the Mexican-Central American Mission, whose territory included British Honduras, Republic of Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, and the western part of Nicaragua, which worked until 1923.¹²

On October 25, 1923, the board of the Inter-American Division voted: "To recommend that the Board of the Mexican and Central American Missions adopt the name Aztec Union." The territory of the Aztec Union included the republics of Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, and British Honduras. There were 21 churches and 1,014 members. The headquarters was located on the 4th street of Querétaro No. 74, Col. Roma, México, D. F. The president was D. A. Parsons.¹³

On May 21, 1924, the Aztec Mission Union had its first meeting in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, and voted to organize five missions, among which was the Central Mexican Mission, whose territory comprised the north half of Vera Cruz, Hidalgo, Guerrero, Puebla, Morelos, Querétaro, and Federal district. Although the state of Mexico is not mentioned, it is inferred that it is the territory where the current section of the valley of Mexico is located.¹⁴

The extensive territory that included the Aztec Union Mission was practically impossible to administer in those times of slow communications. Therefore, the Inter-American Division voted the following, "that the name of the Aztec Union Mission be changed to that of the Mexican Union Mission. The vote included the adjustment of the territory so that the Mexican Union Mission covered the entire country of Mexico. The rest of the territory of the Aztec Union Mission, with the relevant adjustments, formed the Central American Union Mission.¹⁵

The Mexican Union Mission was organized with 29 churches and 656 members. The office was located at Jalapa Street No. 210, Col. Roma, México, D. F. It was organized with six missions, one of which was the Central Mexican Mission. The territory of the Central Mexican Mission included the northern half of Veracruz, Hidalgo, Guerrero, Puebla, Morelos, Querétaro, and the Federal district.¹⁶ In 1931, a territory adjustment was made and the states of Tlaxcala, Guanajuato, and Michoacán were added to the Central Mexican Mission.¹⁷

Twenty years passed and the growth of the Central Mexican Mission continued to be slow. By 1948, there were seven churches and 2,304 members in a territory with 4,500,000 inhabitants, and its territory included the Federal district and the states of Mexico, Michoacán, Querétaro, Guanajuato, and Hidalgo. In 1964-1965, an area-wide evangelistic campaign was led by South American evangelist Carlos Aeschlimann. As a result, the membership of the Central Mexican Mission rose by 2,268. Now the territory of the Central Mission included, in addition to the Federal district, the states of Guanajuato, Hidalgo, Mexico, Querétaro, Michoacán, Jalisco, Colima, and Nayarit. The office of the Central Mexican Mission remained at Agriculture No. 79, Tacubaya, Mexico 18, D. F.¹⁸

By 1970 the Central Mexican Mission consisted of 19 churches and 3,415 members. Its territory covered, in addition to the Federal district, the states of Guanajuato, Hidalgo, Michoacán, Jalisco, and Colima.¹⁹

In 1975 the Central Mexican Mission became the Central Mexican Conference, with 30 churches and 6,240 members. Its territory included Mexico City and the states of Mexico and Morelos.²⁰

In 1985 the Mexican Union was divided into two unions called the South Mexican Union and the North Mexican Union. The latter established its headquarters in Montemorelos, N. L. The Central Conference became part of the North Mexican Union.²¹

The Central Conference continued its growth for the next 15 years. By 2001 it already had 102 churches and 36,768 members. Faced with such growth, a reorganization and readjustment of its territory became necessary. Therefore, in 2001 the territory was divided and the Metropolitan Conference emerged.²²

The Central Mexican Conference had grown and a division of its territory was necessary. It was decided to appoint Pastor Saúl Pérez Baro as field secretary, based in the city of Toluca de Lerdo, so he could thus give better attention to the members.

The Valley Mexican Mission was created on May 25, 2001, with the name of Central Mission, consisted of 63 municipalities only in the state of Mexico. It belonged to the Inter-Oceanic Union. Its first president was Pastor Gregorio Dzul Trejo. In the inaugural event, the Inter-American Division president, Pastor Israel Leito, was present. Also present were the Inter-Oceanic Mexican Union president, César Gómez; secretary, Moisés Reyna; and treasurer, Jairo Zavala Arias. Present from the Northern Mexican Union was president, Sergio Balboa; and from the Central Mexican Conference were president, Abner De los Santos Mena, and treasurer, Josué Balboa Sánchez.

On March 20, 2001, the board of directors of the Central Mexican Conference, chaired by Pastor Abner de los Santos Mena and Jaime Medrano Nieto (secretary), voted to grant aid to the Central Mexican Mission to purchase a property for establishing the office of the new mission.²³ The house that was purchased was located at Calle José M. Pino Suárez # 3, almost in front of the church of Santa Ana Tlapaltitlán. The office remained there until 2011.

It was named Central Mexican Mission until the committee voted at the meeting held on October 27, 2008, under the direction of Pastor Hérbert Cortés Rasgado, to change the name to Valley Mexican Mission.²⁴

On June 28, 2011, the committee of Valley Mexican Mission, chaired by Pastor Héctor R. Armenta Espinoza and CP Raúl Villafán Salas (secretary-treasurer), decided to sell the previous building for 850,000 MXP, and buy a new office for 2,400,000 MXP. To deal with such a large financial commitment, a loan was obtained from FOPROUMC (Project Fund of the Central Mexican Union) for 2,550,000 MXP for a term of ten years. Thanks to the sacrifice and the support of the church members, as well as the Central Mexican Union, the loan was paid in two and a half years and the new, more spacious and functional office was acquired, located in José M. Pino Suárez # 86. This new office was inaugurated on November 13, 2011.

In order to give better attention to the church members of central Mexico and to meet the challenge of evangelizing Mexico City, the Inter-American Division restructured the unions of Mexico and the Central Mexican Union Mission was born in May 2008. The territory of the Central Mexican Mission became part of the new union.

At the beginning the Valley Mexican Mission had seven districts and it currently has 15, divided into three zones:

1. North Zone with three districts: Atlacomulco, Jalpa, and Ixtlahuaca.
2. Central Zone with seven districts: Toluca Center, Toluca North, Santa Ana, San Mateo Atenco, Constitución, Metepec, and Tenango.
3. South Zone with five districts: Tejupilco, Tlatlaya, Arcelia, Altamirano, and Tlalchapa.

Challenges to Fulfill the Mission

One of the great challenges that the mission has is to involve members in missionary work. This is a challenge for pastors who particularly attend the central area of this mission.

People in the territory of the mission cling to traditions and customs. They are reluctant to accept a new doctrine or belief different from what their ancestors have practiced.

Metropolitan evangelistic campaigns have been successful, impacting and involving church members. In 2012, campaigns by Pastor Alejandro Bullón and Pastor Melchor Ferreyra brought 269 people into the church. A metropolitan campaign in Toluca, in 2018 with an evangelist from the General Conference, Pastor Robert Costa, brought in 257 people.

List of Presidents

Gregorio Dzul Trejo (2001-2005); Julián Gómez Jiménez (2005-2006); Herbert Cortés Rasgado (2006-2009); Héctor R. Armenta Espinoza (2009-2019); Eleazar Cipriano Martínez, (2019-present).

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