



SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE

1860–1869

1865

Elbert B. Lane was the first Seventh-day Adventist minister in the South.

1870–1879

1871

Elbert B. Lane preached for several weeks at the Edgefield Junction L&N Railway Station in 1871, and left a company there. In 1873, he returned and organized the Edgefield Junction, Tennessee, Church, the first Seventh-day Adventist Church south of the Mason-Dixon line.

1870–1879

1883

The Blacks in the Edgefield Junction Church were organized into a separate company called the First Colored Seventh-day Adventist Church by Samuel Fulton. It officially became a church on November 9, 1886. Some were disappointed with the separation and left the church.

1889

Charles M. Kinney became the first Black ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister.

1890–1899

1890

Magazine Street Church, the second Black Adventist church, was organized by Alonzo Barry in Louisville, Kentucky.

1891

Charles M. Kinney organized a church in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

1892

A Black church was organized in New Orleans,

Louisiana, which was in the Southern Union territory for a few years.

1894

Another church was organized September 15-16, by C. L. Boyd. Ellen White visited this church in 1904 while Charles M. Kinney was the pastor. The church started on Winter Street, moved to Meharry Boulevard, and is currently called the Hillcrest Church on 25th Avenue. Two more churches were organized that year in Memphis, Tennessee, and Lexington, Kentucky.

1895

Edson White opened his first school in Vicksburg, Mississippi, on Walnut Street and East First Avenue in 1895. A church was established at the same time. The mission school was moved from Walnut Street to 209 Fayette Street. Ellen White preached the dedication sermon for this school and chapel on March 18, 1901.

1896

A church was established in Birmingham, Alabama.

1896

Oakwood Industrial School opened November 16 with 16 students. In 1904, Ellen White visited Oakwood Manual Training School. Oakwood became a junior college in 1917, a senior college in 1943, and a university in 2008. James L. Moran became the first Black president in 1932, and Dr. Leslie L. Pollard is the current president of Oakwood University.

1900–1909

1901

March 16-23, Ellen White visited the Southern Missionary Society (incorporated by her son Ed-



SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE

son in 1898 for education and evangelistic work). She dedicated the Colored church in Vicksburg, Mississippi, March 17, and spoke at the Memphis church March 18. The next two days, she met Adventist leaders in Nashville, and visited the new Gospel Herald Office and Nashville Colored Sanitarium. One month later, the Southern Union Conference was organized.

1901

The first colored Camp Meeting was held at Edgefield Junction, Tennessee.

1902

The Adventist message began among Black people in Birmingham, and in 1902, the first Black Adventist church (now Ephesus Adventist Church) in Birmingham was erected on Graymont Avenue.

1904

Berean Adventist Church in Jackson, Mississippi, was formed and had various locations, including Blair Street (1912), in the Perkins home on Hickory Street (1916-18), and Rose and Pascagoula Streets (1921-22). A church school was also organized (1924-28).

1909

Jordan Street Adventist Church, Pensacola, Florida, formerly known as Ebenezer Adventist Church, was started in 1909 with a tent effort. In 1910, a church was built by Adventist workers.

1910–1919

1911

Mt. Olive Adventist Church in Dothan, Alabama, was the result of a tent effort conducted by G. E. Peters and assisted by elders Murphy, C. A. Wil-

son, and Henry. In 1912, under the leadership of A. L. Miller, president of the Alabama-Mississippi Conference, the first congregation of 23 members was organized with the help of C. A. Wilson and G. E. Peters. Wilson remained pastor for many years.

1920–1929

1927

Riverside Sanitarium was opened by Nellie Druilard for Blacks in 1927. Later known as Riverside Hospital, it served the Nashville community for more than 50 years. Dr. Carl Dent served as medical director for many years. Riverside Hospital was sold in 1983.

1930–1939

1934

The First Black Youth Congress was held in Huntsville, Alabama, on the Oakwood Junior College campus, coordinated by Anna Knight, associate MV (Missionary Volunteer) director for the Southern Union. Knight, from Soso, Mississippi, was the first Adventist woman to serve as a missionary in India. She served the Southern Union in the Education, Health, and Youth Ministry departments. She also served on the Colored Survey Committee that recommended forming the South Atlantic and South Central conferences in 1944.

1937

A small group started meeting in homes, the beginnings of First Adventist Church in Huntsville, Alabama. In 1938, about 17 members were added to the company through Anthony Kelly Sr.'s assistance. Members met and worshipped together regularly, without a pastor, and additional members joined by transfer from the Oakwood College Church. The group was organized under the



SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE

name Berean Adventist Church. C. E. Moseley, chair of the Religion Department at Oakwood, acted as counselor and overseer. He initiated an internship program whereby ministerial students were assigned to help plan and conduct the worship program. Land was purchased, and a church was built at Grove St. on Oak Ave., later named Gallatin St. The church was renamed First Church. There was also a church school in the building. The church is currently located at 1303. Evangel Dr., Huntsville, Alabama.

1940–1949

1945

In 1945 the South Central Conference (SCC) was organized at a meeting in Birmingham, Alabama, with 42 churches in a territory covering Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, and the portion of Florida west of the Apalachicola River.

1946

Herman R. Murphy, former statesman and conference evangelist for Alabama-Mississippi Conference, served as the first president, 1946-1954, of South Central. SCC officially began operations in Nashville, Tennessee, at the Hawkins Street home of the Louis B. Reynolds family. Later, they moved to their first office, 1914 Charlotte Street.

1946

The first South Central Camp Meeting was held on the campus of Oakwood College, June 27-July 6, and has been held there annually through the present time.

1950–1959

1954

Walter W. Fordham was elected as the second president. During that time, Earl E. Cleveland

baptized 571 in Montgomery, Alabama, the largest baptism in South Central history.

1958

A new South Central office was erected in 1958, at 715 Youngs Lane, under the presidency of W. W. Fordham.

1960–1969

1960

The third president of South Central was Frank L. Bland.

1962

Charles E. Dudley Sr. was elected as the fourth president in 1962. He was the longest-serving president in South Central history, 31 years. Dudley led out in the South Central-sponsored building of Ashby Gymnasium on the Oakwood College campus to serve annual Camp Meetings and provide a college sports facility.

1967

Charles Joseph and Earl W. Moore raised money to purchase the first Adventist Community Services van. This van was used to minister to people during the riots in Detroit, Michigan, and in the Poor People's March on Washington. Thirty physicians offered free medical care to thousands of Resurrection City residents.

1970–1979

1970

Charles Dudley, South Central president, partnered with the Federal Government to provide low-income HUD housing for the poor and elderly. Five properties were funded by the Federal Government: two in Kentucky, one in Mississippi, and two in Tennessee.



SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE

1973

Family Health Education Services (FHES) was adopted by regional conferences as an alternative to Home Health Education Service.

1973

Eric C. Ward was invited to serve as Oakwood College Church's senior pastor in Huntsville, Alabama. Under Ward's leadership, a new College Church building was a reality in 1977. The circular structure housed the pastor's offices, treasurer, medical emergency room, choir room, Sabbath School classrooms, kitchen, and a dining area that seats 2,700. During Ward's 21-year tenure, membership grew from 348 to more than 2,000. During this time, Ward also established and built Mount Calvary Adventist Church in Huntsville, Alabama, and simultaneously led both congregations. He also created the widely distributed Revival Bible Lessons in the late 1970s.

1980–1989

1980

The first phase of constructing a building to house Oakwood Elementary was begun and completed in 1993.

1984

The Supplemental Retirement plan for South Central workers was initiated by C. E. Dudley Sr.

1987

In January ground was broken for a new South Central office building. The facility was constructed by W. O. Freeman. Housing the administrative and departmental offices, the Adventist Book Center, and a chapel seating 150 for workers' meetings and other gatherings, the current office building was erected for \$2.5 million in 1990 and paid for in five years.

1990–1999

1990

Women's Ministries began as the Women's Commission. Laura Smith served as first commissioner. Later in 1990 it became the Women's Ministries Department.

1990

An Archives Department was established to preserve South Central history and sponsor Adventist History tours. R. Steven Norman III was the first director.

1993

Joseph W. McCoy was elected as the fifth South Central president.

1996

The South Central constituents voted to change the term elections for the Conference officers and departmental directors from a three-year term (triennial) to every five years (quinquennial).

1996

South Central purchased property to develop into a campground in Shelbyville, Tennessee.

1999

The South Central Conference, under the leadership of J. W. McCoy, and other regional conferences voted to establish their own retirement plan. In 2000, the regional conferences chose to create a Defined Benefits Retirement Plan for all of its employees, rather than the North American Division's Defined Contributions Plan. Later they established the Regional Conference Retirement Plan (RCRP), and are the only local conferences operating a full-service retirement plan for their employees, without Division or General Conference oversight.



SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE

2000–2009

2003

South Central established the Latino Ministries Department with Edgardo Herrera as coordinator. Companies of Latino believers were organized at Russellville and Kilpatrick, Alabama, and the first Annual Latino Convention was held on Thanksgiving Day.

2005

Benjamin P. Browne was elected as the sixth president. During this time, South Central had 147 congregations, a membership of 31,784, and tithe of more than \$14 million.

2005

South Central's first Prayer Ministries and Men's Ministries departments were established. The first Men's Prayer Summit was held.

2009

Dana C. Edmond was elected as the seventh South Central president.

2010–2019

2010

South Central First Youth Congress Mission Cruise to the Bahamas was held.

2010

Lola Moore was the first female pastor hired by South Central and installed to the pastoral staff at the Oakwood University Church.

2011

Merkita M. Mosley was elected as the first South Central female treasurer/administrator.

2012

Shawn Moss was hired as the second female

pastor. She is also the first solo female pastor of a congregation in Memphis, Tennessee.

2012

Breath of Life Television Ministry moved to South Central, with Dr. Carlton P. Byrd as both speaker and Oakwood University Church pastor.

2012

Latino Ministries became Multicultural Ministries Department and added Haitian, African, and Korean focuses.

2013

South Central sponsored a female pastor, Tina Carriger, to Andrews Seminary.

2015

South Central housing properties were sold.

2015

The first South Central Pastoral Commissioning Service for women was held for Lola Moore and Shawn Moss.

2016

VCOM, Virtual Church Officers' Meeting, launched and broadcasted online.

2016

Benjamin Jones Jr. was elected as the eighth South Central president in 2016, and is currently serving.

2017

The Charles and Etta Dudley Foundation was established to honor the memory and work of the Dudleys by providing financial resources to support Christian education and other charitable projects.



SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE

2017

Phase II of Oakwood Adventist Academy's building was completed.

2018

Riverside Sanitarium received an official Tennessee Historical Marker as a North-Nashville Treasure. On September 29, the Riverside Historical Society (RHS) unveiled the historical marker paying homage to the first Black Adventist medical facility (1901-1983) and doctors Dorothy Brown and Carl Dent at the original site, 800 Youngs Lane, Nashville, Tennessee. At its height, Riverside Sanitarium provided the community with a 290-bed acute care hospital, and was a major employer and center of activities in the North-Nashville community. Riverside Adventist Chapel continues its legacy of providing healthcare to the community.

2019

South Central churches in Mississippi provided food and support to displaced and separated immigrant families during a period of tightened government enforcement.

2019

First Church Officer's training was held June 7-9, during Camp Meeting.

2020

The grand opening of the Oakwood Academy Building, Phase III, was completed.

2020

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the South Central Conference Operation Impact Program assisted local churches, members, and schools with over \$600,000.

2020

South Central Conference currently has 149 churches, 38,024 members, 8 elementary schools, junior academies, and 1 academy.

PRESIDENTS IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE TERRITORY:

SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE

Herman R. Murphy, 1946-1954
Walter W. Fordham, 1954-1960
Frank L. Bland, 1960-1962
Charles E. Dudley Sr., 1962-1993
Joseph W. McCoy, 1993-2005
Benjamin P. Browne, 2005-2009
Dana C. Edmond, 2009-2016
Benjamin Jones Jr., 2016-