

Espírito Santo, Otávio do (1900–1983)



Otávio do Espírito Santo

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Otávio do Espírito Santo was born on November 20, 1900, in the city of Aracaju, state of Sergipe, Brazil. When he was 18, the Federal Government awarded him a scholarship for studying mechanical engineering in the United States.¹

After returning to Brazil from the United States, he was baptized as an Adventist believer in the mid-1920s. Not long after his baptism, he was appointed as director of the *Instituto Profissional Coelho e Campos*, an important non-denominational vocational school in Aracaju. The school aimed to develop the local economy and train professionals for working in the mills and industries. Otávio was the school director from 1927 to 1930, where he was also named a full professor through a public tender. Subsequently, he was elected state deputy, but with the political situation in the country caused by the national coup of 1930, he was arrested and removed from the exercise of his public offices. After being released, he moved to the countryside of the state of Bahia.²

In 1937, the Taquara Academy (today Cruzeiro do Sul Adventist Academy), which was established by Pastor Abraham Classen Harder, came to be administered by the Adventist Church, and Otávio was invited to be its new director. During his term, the school was made official under government laws, the Bergold's Sanatorium was acquired and renovated, and the bakery and cafeteria were built.³ He was the school director until 1941,⁴ and taught Drawing, Mathematics and Portuguese from 1941 to 1942.⁵ Afterwards, he led the Educational department of the Rio Grande do Sul Conference from 1941 to 1943, and the Sabbath School and Youth departments in 1943.⁶

In 1944 Otávio do Espírito Santo accepted the call to work at the Brazil Publishing House, where he served for 10 years as book translator and editor of *Vida e Saúde* (Life and Health) and *O Atalaia* (The Watchman). In 1952 he wrote the book *Páginas Poéticas* (Poetic Pages), published by *Companhia Gráfica Novo Mundo*.⁷

At the end of 1956, he faced great health problems and almost died but recovered. In 1957, he was acquitted by judicial decree of the charges from the lawsuit back in the 1930s and was reappointed as full professor of the Sergipe State School, former *Instituto Profissional Coelho e Campos*. A short time later he was renamed as its director, where he worked until his retirement.⁸ Over this period, he also led evangelistic efforts in the city of São Cristóvão from 1960 to 1962, resulting in many baptisms.⁹ Subsequently, Otávio taught at Northeast Brazil Academy in 1963, leaving this position to be the first director of Itaquara Academy, state of Bahia, serving there from 1964 to 1967.¹⁰

After his retirement, Otávio moved to the state of Rio de Janeiro. On November 15, 1973, he celebrated his golden wedding anniversary with Micol Gueiros Santos, who served by his side as a Portuguese, English, and French teacher. Together they had one daughter named Kelita Souza. Sadly, his wife passed away two years later, on December 19, 1975.¹¹ In March 1976, Otávio married Vitória Nardelli Nascimento, who was his companion until his death on December 19, 1983, at the age of 83, in Barra Mansa, state of Rio de Janeiro.¹²

Otávio do Espírito Santo is remembered for his contributions to the educational and publishing work of the Adventist Church in Brazil. He was also an active church member, holding leadership positions and conducting many evangelistic conferences. In this way, he contributed to the spreading of the Adventist message from northern to southern regions of Brazil.

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NOTES

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