



Minas Gerais Adventist College (FADMINAS) Campus II in 2020.

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Minas Gerais Adventist College

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Minas Gerais Adventist College (FADMINAS) is a Seventh-day Adventist educational institution offering elementary, high school, and college instruction. A part of the worldwide Adventist educational network, it enrolls both boarding and day students. It operates on two campuses in the mission field of the Southeast Brazil Union Conference (USeB). The first campus is located at the Ityrapuan Railway Station, zip code 37200-000, in the rural area of Lavras, in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Coordinates of latitude: -21.18268 and longitude: -

44.56072. The second one is located on Joaquim Gomes Guerra Street, 590, zip code 37200-000, in the Kennedy neighborhood of the city of Lavras, also in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Coordinates of latitude: -21.14460 and longitude: -44.59183.¹

Campus I accommodates facilities for preschool, elementary, and high school education. These facilities cover 10,000 square meters, included girls' and boys' dormitories, sports complex, music school, administrative building, and a chapel, in addition to spacious green area. Higher education facilities on campus II offer undergraduate courses in business, accounting, pedagogy, and marketing. With buildings covering 3,800 square meters, this second campus provides modern classrooms, a library, and an auditorium.

As of 2020, the institution served approximately 740 students enrolled on both campuses. These students were served by 150 employees, among which are teachers, deans, monitors and others.²

Developments that Led to the School's Establishment

The Adventist message reached Minas Gerais at the end of the nineteenth century through the brothers and canvassers Alberto and Frederico Berger. They had canvassed in the current region of the municipality of Teófilo Otoni and, as a result of their work, thirty people were baptized there forming one of the first Adventist congregations in Brazil.³ In the south of Minas Gerais, the message came through Pastor Clarence E. Rentfro.⁴ Rentfro established himself in the town of Juiz de Fora and, after the field reorganization of the East Brazil Union Mission (later known as UEB and currently USEB), he started to manage the East Minas Mission (defunct), based in Juiz de Fora, from 1921.⁵

With the expansion of the Adventist message to other places in southern Minas Gerais, Adventists began to feel the need for a school that would offer their children an education based on Christian principles. In 1925, an Adventist member, José Garcia, donated a piece of land to the East Minas Mission in the village of Capim Roxo (now in the municipality of Caparaó) in southern Minas Gerais.⁶ About twelve years later, the Escola Mineira Adventista (Minas Adventist School or EMA) was established on this location in 1937, it was considered the first boarding school in Minas Gerais⁷ and operated until 1950.⁸

The expansion of the Adventist message also reached the city of Lavras in the late 1950s. There, in 1958, pastors Waldemar Gröschel and Raul Cordeiro led a series of evangelistic meetings that resulted in several baptisms and the start of an Adventist congregation.⁹ At the end of the 1970s, the East Brazil Union Mission developed quickly, establishing both day and board schools, acquiring hospitals, and conducting intensive evangelistic campaigns. This expansion extended across all of the mission fields of the East Brazil Union Mission, which at the time were the Rio-Espirito Santo Mission, the Northeast Brazil Conference, the Minas Mission (currently the Central Minas Conference), and the Bahia Mission (currently the Bahia Conference).¹⁰ Only the Minas Mission did not have a boarding school.¹¹ However, with the steady growth in number of members in Minas Gerais region, demand for a school to serve the children of Adventist families and to witness to the non-Adventists. This need was made

more evident by the overcrowding in most Adventist schools in the region. Consequently, the union administration decided to build a boarding school in the state of Minas Gerais.¹²

The Minas Mission administrators were responsible for locating an adequate place for the construction of the boarding school.¹³ And after an intensive search, they found a 140-acre farm called Santa Helena that would serve well for the purpose of building a new Adventist academy. It was located near the Ityrapuan Railway Station about twenty-four kilometers from Lavras.¹⁴ Among those who followed the choosing and purchasing process of the land were the East Brazil Union Mission leaders and the Minas Mission administrators, as well as brother Silvio Ferreira de Carvalho, who was a well-known farmer in the region.¹⁵

School Foundation

The late 1970s and early 1980s were decisive for the academy's foundation. During this period, the main activities involved finding the appropriate property, raising funds to purchase the land, and breaking ground for construction. Despite a well-organized plan, the funds raised to purchase the land were insufficient; however, project administrators were not discouraged. They contacted the mayor of Lavras and explained to him the objectives of the school. The mayor showed empathy for the project and put it on the City Council plenary sessions agenda with the goal of enabling government aid for the foundation of the college.¹⁶ The Minas Mission leaders were given opportunity to present their proposal to the council members. In the end, the aid requested was unanimously approved and the Lavras City Hall contributed the remaining amount of money to purchase the land.¹⁷ The Santa Helena Farm was purchased on April 28, 1980, costing Cr\$ 21 million (approximately US\$ 430,327).¹⁸

On the day the Minas Gerais Adventist Academy (IAEMG) cornerstone was laid, the Minas Mission leaders and the authorities from the city of Lavras were present.¹⁹ The campus began to take shape with the temporary construction of the buildings for administration, dormitory, kitchen, cafeteria, and chapel. In addition to the construction of the buildings, the first orchard was also planted, agricultural implements, phone lines, an irrigation system, and 150 cattle heads as well as Valmet tractors were purchased.²⁰ Milton Afonso, an Adventist philanthropist and the Golden Cross Company president, helped the IAEMG with the donation of a Mercedes Bens 608D truck, for college's transportation needs.²¹

IAEMG opened for classes in the first quarter of 1981. In 1982, the institution offered only a supplementary program,²² with only thirty-four on campus students who actively helped in the construction of the school buildings. In May 29 of that year, the first baptismal ceremony was hosted at the institution, when nine people were baptized. This event, not long after the institution was founded, demonstrated IAEMG's potential to fulfill the evangelistic role for which it had been established.²³

About a year later, in 1983, Pastor José Pires de Araújo was sent to work at the institution as its first dean. During that time, his wife, Terezinha Palma de Araújo, worked at the school as teacher and dean. Marco Aurélio Martins Prata often provided assistance to the institution as administrator.²⁴

History of the School

In March 1983, the school began to expand its academic offerings when it enrolled the first students in elementary grades one through six.²⁵ In May of the following year, the first changes in the institution's administration took place, although the objectives would not change as the emphasis on fulfilling the mission always remained well defined. In addition, from 1984 to 1994 new construction and capital equipment purchases continued to improve campus facilities. In 1984, three telephone lines were purchased, and a temporary building was constructed to house thirty students from the supplementary program. The school expanded its agricultural enterprises to include cattle, 500 chickens, and 2,680 fruit trees. A bakery was also established.²⁶

The institution's goal in 1984 was to implement high school by the end of the year.²⁷ This was enabled by a Cr\$ 2 million (approximately US\$ 647,039.00) donation from the Brazilian Ministry of Education to pay for the construction of the remaining buildings.²⁸ In addition, the institution also received a portion of the collected offerings by the Seventh-day Adventist Church during the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, adding up to Cr\$ 345,000 (approximately US\$ 111,614.00), which were used for the construction of permanent school buildings. The school was gradually built by teachers and staff members who were dedicated to providing the necessary conditions to increase enrollment.²⁹

In 1986, thirty-two young adults were taking the supplementary program, work on campus construction projects to pay for their studies. In that year, the institution won several exhibition awards for the quality of its animals.³⁰ At the time, the IAEMG had ninety-two head of Dutch cattle, which produced about 480 liters of milk daily. This milk was sold throughout the region providing the institution with financial resources to continue the construction buildings. The garden provided vegetables, which were distributed to Lavras retailers, in addition to meeting the school's internal needs. The orchard had about thousand fruit trees and a beekeeping area that had twenty-one beehives.³¹

In 1989, the institution continued to make more structural adjustments. The school had fifty-eight administrators, teachers, and student workers. The latter were still housed in temporary buildings because it was necessary to optimize the space to better accommodate employees and students. During this period, most of the students had scholarships and were attending the supplementary program or elementary school. During the day, they worked in different sectors of the school, but mainly in the construction of the new buildings. These new buildings improved the comfort, convenience, and pleasant environment of the campus. Among the final stage buildings of that year were the girls' dormitory (with a capacity to accommodate 200 students), the

girls' dormitory chapel, the school building, the kitchen, the cafeteria, and the dairy farm.³²

In 1992, the Central Minas Conference area was reorganized and the IAEMG came under the administration of the East Brazil Union Mission (UEB).³³ It was voted to open the elementary school and high school freshman classes that year. The institution systems started to be computerized as well. In the following year, the institution's administration implemented a water supply system by drilling an artesian well and installing a water tank with the capacity of 230 thousand liters. The construction and renovation of dormitories, school building, and cafeteria as well as two new houses for teachers continued.³⁴

With the opening of secondary level education, IAEMG was finally dedicated on March 7, 1994. It had taken a decade to build the school. By this time, there were eight teachers and 154 new high school students. Among the guests for the ceremony were financial sponsors, construction foremen, municipal authorities, and church leaders and members. Buildings including the administrative offices, classrooms, the male dormitory, the cafeteria and the chapel were dedicated during the event.³⁵

In 1995, IAEMG received permission to open the data processing technician course. Throughout the year, not only did students achieve academic success, but due to the influence of programs, services and the Christian environment, fifty-three people decided to give their lives to Christ through baptism.³⁶ In the following year (1996), the institution held its first high school graduation ceremony. This group was composed of sixty-two students, fifty-eight of whom had already been baptized.³⁷

IAEMG had 258 primary level students enrolled in 1998.³⁸ In the following year, two new undergraduate courses were opened: business administration and accounting.³⁹ With the institution's academic progress and success, IAEMG prepared to open a new campus in the downtown area of Lavras. The new campus offered higher education courses exclusively, broadening the educational opportunities for the local population.⁴⁰

As IAEMG grew, new projects were implemented to fulfill needs. When the Fazenda Santa Helena (Saint Helena Farm) was acquired in the 1980s, a small chapel was used for worship services by about forty people. During the following decade, the congregation outgrew the chapel, and the church services were moved to the boys' dormitory chapel. Later, the meetings were transferred to the girls' chapel. The dream of building a church home for the young Adventist congregation was accomplished in 2001 through the combined resources of the South American Division, the East Brazil Union Mission, and donations from businessmen and other church members.⁴¹

Also, the physical renovation of IAEMG's second campus began in 2001. The new campus included over 2000 square meters of constructed facilities to adequately support the Faculdades Integradas Adventistas de Minas Gerais [Minas Gerais Integrated Adventist College], the functional name initially given to IAEMG Campus II.⁴² Investments in the new facilities included a computer laboratory, the restructuring of the Escritório Modelo (Model Office) and Junior Company (a program allowing students to practice professional skills by offering services to the public), the creation of several support and research centers, the purchase of books and

periodicals for the library, and the creation of a scientific magazine entitled *Symposium*.⁴³ Campus II was inaugurated in the urban area of Lavras on February 8, 2012. The ceremony was attended by municipal authorities, union conference administrators, district pastors, and local church members besides the eighty students recently accepted after passing the entrance exam for business and accounting courses.⁴⁴

In 2004, the business and accounting courses were recognized by the Brazilian Ministry of Education. Following the expansion of its physical and academic facilities in 2005, IAEMG Campus II was renamed Minas Gerais Adventist College (FADMINAS).⁴⁵ FADMINAS quickly earned a recognition for excellent academics. The institution's growth proved to be dynamic, exponential, and frequent. In September 2006, the institution received the Quality Trophy after an evaluation by the Instituto Brasileiro de Pesquisa Gomes Pimentel [Brazilian Institute of Research and Quality Gomes Pimentel]. When the award was presented, Waldomiro D. Dos Passos, college principal, highlighted the importance of the award, reinforcing to the authorities and the public who were present that the main objective of the institution was to help restore the image of the Creator in human beings.⁴⁶

Other major accomplishments followed. The FADMINAS church was inaugurated on December 1, 2007. About 1,500 people attended the ceremony, among whom were Seventh-day Adventist Church global leaders, municipal authorities, businessmen, and state government representatives.⁴⁷ In the following years, FADMINAS continued to experience great advances and teaching excellence. In 2015, the first classes of the pedagogy course took place, and in the following year the institution started offering the marketing course.⁴⁸ Thus, the college curriculum and the pursuit of academic excellence at the institution have steadily advanced the preaching of the gospel through educational work.⁴⁹

As of 2020, the FADMINAS main campus remains in its original location. Despite years of challenges, the institution has remained resilient and developed an excellent Adventist educational program. Leaders and staff members remain faithful to the Adventist educational mission, applying Christian principles to their teaching in order to continue promoting the integral development of students, thereby forming citizens committed to God and the society in which they live.⁵⁰

Historical Role of the School

Since its founding, Minas Gerais Adventist College goals and objectives have been aligned with the missionary and educational guidelines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The young students of FADMINAS carry out various missionary projects such as Geração 148 [Generation 148],⁵¹ which takes place during the school year. This program mobilizes a significant number of people in humanitarian service through activities such as visiting nursing homes, orphanages, and prisons.

Another project that involves students, teachers, and staff actively on behalf of the community is the Impacto Esperança [Hope Impact Project].⁵² which is organized by the institution's administration in partnership with the

district pastor. Through this project, books are distributed in neighboring towns.⁵³ As a result of this and other investments, two churches have already been built through employees' donations. The two churches are in Minas Gerais, one is in the city of Itumirim and the other one is in the city of Carrancas. FADMINAS's influence is extends beyond its campus to the community around it.⁵⁴

As it provides excellent education with good facilities, Minas Gerais Adventist College sets an educational standard not only in the city where it is located, but also in the entire region served by the Southeast Brazil Union Conference. As of 2020, the boarding school serves mainly students from the state of Minas Gerais and regions around the institution, but also receives students from other parts of the country.⁵⁵

What Remains to be Done to Fulfill the School's Mission

FADMINAS has served to impact and transform many lives. Children and youths who have studied at the institution have been greatly blessed from the activities developed there. The education offered is not only concerned with teaching within the classroom, but also with shaping students for service to their communities with empathy and, above all, commitment to biblical principles, preparing themselves for eternity.⁵⁶

It is possible to see God's action in every detail of the institution's development from its opening with thirty-four students to 2020 with more than 700 students. The institution's future plans include the opening of eight new undergraduate courses and achieving greater performance at the graduate level, in addition to maintaining the evangelistic purpose, which has been the goal of Adventist education in Brazil since the time of the pioneers who started it. Therefore, FADMINAS's administrators and employees maintain firm ties with the historical past while working toward a vision of the future full of hope for the soon return of Christ.⁵⁷

Chronology of Directors

Minas Gerais Adventist Academy (1980-2004)

Hermínio V. de Andrade (1980-1981), José Miranda Rocha and Marco Aurélio Martins Prata (1982-1983), Lourival Batista Preuss (1984-1988), Dirceu Prates dos Reis (1989-1993), Elias Fraga Germanovicz (1994-1998), Josias Candido de Lacerda (1999-2002).

Minas Gerais Adventist College (2005-present)

Waldomiro D. Dos Passos (2003-2007), Josué Martins (2008-2009), Edinelson Sudre Storch (2010-2012), Luis Daniel Pittini Strumiello (2013-present).⁵⁸

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57. Ibid.
58. More information about the Minas Gerais Adventist College can be found on the website: <http://www.fadminas.org.br/>, or on social media - Facebook: @colegiofadminas, Instagram: @fadminasoficial and Youtube: Colégio Fadminas [FADMINAS College].

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