



Ceara Conference headquarters.

Photo courtesy of Ceara Conference Archives, 2019.

Ceara Conference

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The Ceara Conference (ACe) is an administrative unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, located in the territory of the Northeast Brazil Union Mission (UNeB). Its headquarters is on Dom Joaquim de Melo street, nº 559, CEP 60430-660, in Rodolfo Teófilo neighborhood, in the city of Fortaleza, State of Ceará, Brazil.

This territory of 148,894,757 km² is home to about nine million, seventy-five thousand, six hundred forty-nine people.¹ Of these, 51,723 are Adventists, distributed in the 212 churches of the Ceara Conference.² The data

suggests approximately one Adventist per 175 inhabitants. There are three school units of the Adventist Education Network in operation in the field, totaling 851 students. These are: the Adventist College Paulo César Afonso, in the city of Fortaleza, with 364 students; the Adventist School Arlete Afonso, in Quixadá, with 441 students; and the Adventist School of Sobral, in Sobral, with 51 students.³

The Adventist church in the territory of the Ceara Conference has 299 Pathfinders Clubs⁴ with 6,477 members and 129 Adventurers Clubs⁵ with 2,490 participants.⁶ The Adventist message is also spread by TV Novo Tempo (Hope Channel–Brazil) through the digital channel 24.1 on open TV in Fortaleza; and TV operators throughout the state through channels 33 and 433 (Sky), 184 and 684 (Net), 184 and 684 (Claro), and 214 (Oi). The signal covers the entire urban area of the state of Ceará, and its range potential is over 2 million people.⁷

For the smooth progress of the Adventist work in the state of Ceará, the Association has 45 employees, an accredited, and a licensed worker. There are also 35 ordained ministers and 9 licensed workers.⁸

The Origin of the Adventist Work in the Territory of the Conference

As it is a centenary institution, the Ceara Conference had its field run by other SDA administrative units. Until 1910 the Adventist work in Brazil was subordinate to the South American Union Conference, then based in the city of Buenos Aires, capital of Argentina.⁹ In December 1910 representatives of Adventists from all over Brazil gathered in the city of Porto Alegre, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, to form the Brazil Union Conference. During the assembly of creation of this new conference, the delegates also voted to create the North Brazilian Mission, covering the states of Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte, Ceará, Maranhão, Pará, Amazonas, Mato Grosso, Goiás, and Mato Grosso do Sul.¹⁰ The first president of this mission was pastor Frederick Weber Spies.¹¹

In November 1915 the Seventh-day Adventist Church world leaders met in Loma Linda, California, U.S.A., and decided to create the South American Division (SAD).¹² The following year, in February 1916, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was officially organized, with pastor Oliver Montgomery as its first president.¹³ At the same meeting the division of the territory of the Brazil Union Conference was recommended.¹⁴ However, the Brazil Union Conference was only divided in 1918, giving rise to the North Brazilian Union (which later became the Southeast Brazil Union Conference, USeB). This new conference took care of eleven states, including Ceará, and its first president was pastor John Lipke.¹⁵

A year later (1919) the North Brazil Union was reorganized, with the name of East Brazil Union Conference (UEB) to cover the federal district, the eastern state of Minas Gerais, the states of Rio de Janeiro, Espírito Santo, Bahia, Sergipe, Alagoas, Pernambuco, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte, Piauí, Ceará, Maranhão, Pará, and Amazonas.¹⁶ In this period five missions with large territorial extensions were created. However, the states of Amazonas, Ceará, Maranhão, Pará, and Piauí, although listed above, remained without the official presence of Adventist organizations (churches, hospitals, schools).¹⁷

In 1927, with the establishment of the Mission Lower Amazonas, headquartered in Belém, in the state of Pará;¹⁸ the state of Ceará was connected to its evangelistic field. Its first president, pastor J. L. Brown,¹⁹ was sent to prepare the field and preside over it until the arrival of his successor;²⁰ Pastor Leo B. Halliwell²¹ in January 1929. The immense territory has made any group of missionaries too small for the task, even more so when one could only count on canvassers²² to bear such responsibility. Despite the challenges, the canvassers André Gedrath and Zacarias Rodrigues worked hard and were the first Adventists registered in the state of Ceará.²³

André Gedrath began working in the state of Ceará in June 1930.²⁴ In the city of Fortaleza, capital of Ceará, the canvasser sold 191 collections composed of the book "O Guia Prático da Saúde" (The Practical Guide to Health) and the magazine "O Atalaia" (The Watchtower), a great achievement for the time.²⁵ From the capital, Gedrath traveled to the countryside, visiting cities as Juazeiro do Norte, one of the largest Catholic pilgrimage sites in the world. There, the canvasser even sold Adventist literature to Father Cicero,²⁶ a famous Catholic priest whom people asked for blessings daily. In addition to Juazeiro, Gedrath also left literature in the surrounding towns and villages.²⁷

While Gedrath was in Juazeiro do Norte, a movement took place and became known as "The Revolution of 1930." The day after the revolution began, federal soldiers arrived in the city, compelling the canvasser to return to Fortaleza. On December 23, 1930, Gedrath expected some orders of books as usual in the city's public garden. In offering a well-known book "Doze Grandes Sinais da Volta de Jesus" (Twelve Great Signs of Jesus' Return), Gedrath was arrested on charges of making communist propaganda. Without trial he was thrown in a solitary cell with no bathroom and only a wooden bench. For eleven days he was kept undernourished while awaiting trial, and if convicted, his sentence would be death.²⁸

Knowing of his situation, a Presbyterian pastor sent food and a mat so that he could sleep. André prayed with persistence in the days that followed, and God heard him. Upon being brought to the authorities for trial, he discovered that his lawyer was one of the friends he had made through the canvassing while visiting the patients in a hospital. This lawyer had bought some books and a Bible, and in his defense argued, "I am fully convinced that André is not a communist. If anyone proves me to be mistaken, I will give up his defense; otherwise, I will fight until Gedrath is set free." Gedrath's defense was entirely voluntary.²⁹ He was exonerated and upon leaving the prison, he immediately returned to evangelistic work through the canvassing.

Meanwhile, the world faced, in 1929, the worst and longest period of economic recession of the 20th century, known as "the Great Depression." As the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church distributed missionary resources from the United States, the Brazilian missionary field was affected by the crisis in 1931.³⁰ This difficulty was yet another aggravating factor in the long trajectory of problems faced for the advance of the gospel in favor of the northeastern people.

Although the northeast is a producer of important agricultural resources and of plant and mineral extraction, the policy of Café com Leite³¹ maintained the economic order favorable to the states of São Paulo and Minas

Gerais, while the rest of the country was neglected.³² As a result of this economic cessation, the Brazilian northeast was becoming a lawless land, where insurgent powers fought among themselves.³³ Another factor to be considered in the history of the state of Ceará is the long periods of drought that caused death and mass exodus, since 90 percent of its territory is semiarid. The state is at the center of the so-called “droughts Polygon,” an area subject to prolonged periods of drought, and therefore has been the subject of special provisions from the public sector since 1946.³⁴ It was in the midst of this scenario that the Adventist Church developed in the state.

Despite the challenges, in 1936, as a result of André Gedrath's efforts, the city of Fortaleza had a good number of interested persons, and the environment was already well prepared for a series of meetings.³⁵ Those interested in the Adventist message in that city were already excited and proposing to help with the expenses for renting a room for the meetings.³⁶

Organizational History of the Association

On December 8, 1936, representatives of the Adventist Church in the South American Division met at a council and decided to divide the territory of the East Brazilian Union Conference. This division originated the North Brazil Union (UNB), with its headquarters in the city of Belém, Pará. The same meeting defined that the UNB was organized as follows: (a) the states of Pará, Amazonas, and the territory of Acre form a mission to be called The Lower-Amazonas Mission; (b) the states of Ceará, Piauí, and Maranhão form a mission, the name of which will be chosen by the Commission of the North Brazil Union in agreement with the South American Division.³⁷

Informally, the field was named the Ceará Mission,³⁸ but the name chosen for the new mission was North Coast Mission (MCN). Its territory covered 730,153,750 km² (the sum of the three states),³⁹ and its first headquarters was located on 1120 Pedro I Street, in the center of the city of Fortaleza. As soon as it was inaugurated, the mission had pastor Samuel Thomas as the only accredited minister.⁴⁰ In 1938 Pastor R. A. Wilcox was chosen to be the first president of the new mission, with his wife, Violeta Wilcox,⁴¹ as the first secretary-treasurer of the field in 1944.⁴² In 1938 the North Coast Mission's first official statistic pointed to the presence of a church with only 34 members, about one Adventist per 108,000 people.⁴³ A long and difficult work began there, but the mission of this administrative unit followed principles that remain to this day "to use the various gifts and ministries to fulfill their duty, acting in different areas that carry out projects, programs, and strategic actions."⁴⁴

In 1937 Pastors Leo Halliwell and Samuel Thomas arrived in Fortaleza, where they held a series of conferences at the Cine Rex.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, canvasser André Gedrath started working inside Ceará.⁴⁶ In April 1939 there was not only one group but “some groups, as the result of our faithful canvasser's work.”⁴⁷ Finally, the first baptism of Ceará took place on May 6, 1939, in the Parangaba Lagoon in Fortaleza, where 15 people gave their testimony of faith. The ceremony was performed by Pastors Leo B. Halliwell and Roger A. Wilcox.⁴⁸ Among the baptized were Valkírio de Souza Lima and Vicente de Souza Lima. Years later Walkirio served in the Adventist Church as

pastor and administrator, and Vicente worked as a radiology technician at the Adventist hospital in Belém.⁴⁹

From 1940 the Adventist church of Fortaleza began to meet in the room of the Chauffeurs Association of Ceará.

⁵⁰ In 1941 Pastor Gustavo Storch directed a series of meetings in Fortaleza and in the state countryside. Even with persecutions by local priests, the meetings resulted in about thirty people preparing for baptism.⁵¹ The city, described by Storch as having the “healthiest climate of all the coastal capitals of Brazil,” already had a good group of Adventists. At the end of the meetings, the church of Fortaleza was officially organized, with the baptism of 28 people, and was led by Pastor John Baerg.⁵² In the same year, the North Coast Mission began operating on 834 Guilherme Rocha Street.⁵³

In July 1943 Pastor Storch directed a new series of meetings in Fortaleza, on the same Cine Rex. They lasted until the end of October with about eighty people enrolled in the preparation class for baptism, and on November 15, 1943, 34 of them were baptized. In late 1943 the Adventist church of Fortaleza had a Sabbath School of 120 members.⁵⁴ Until the early 1950s, the North Coast Mission office was located at three different addresses. In 1946 the headquarters of the mission moved to a house on 1066 São Paulo Street, in downtown Fortaleza.⁵⁵ In 1948 the office moved to 364 Major Facundo Street, also in downtown Fortaleza.⁵⁶

In the northeast of Brazil, canvassing was the main means of reaching people for Christ. Men like André Gedrath and so many others walked through the state of Ceará with “hands full of leaflets, brochures, and books containing the message.”⁵⁷ Canvassing courses were taught by Pastors Leo Halliwell and Roger Wilcox and maintained their vigor until the 1990s.⁵⁸ Another missionary front used by the pioneers was evangelism in a series of public meetings. The most widely used themes were “The Prophetic History of the World” and other topics related to prophecies. The locations were usually improvised, but there was never a shortage of people at these conferences. It was not always possible to plan and rely on many resources, because the harvest was too big for so few workers.⁵⁹

Even with these advances, there were few cities where there was a solid and firm group of Adventists. Itapagé, 78 miles from Fortaleza, was one of these cities where there were less than ten Adventists who lived “discouraged, defeated, and wavering.”⁶⁰ To try to reverse this situation, the mission sent Pastor Orlando Barreto to run a series of meetings in the city. A room with a capacity of 200 people was rented, and more than two hundred people attended evangelistic meetings daily. In December 1952 an Adventist chapel with a capacity for 100 people was built in the city. As a result, a Sabbath School class began operating with 53 registered members, and 11 people were baptized in January 1953.⁶¹

In early 1955 the North Coast Mission had two ordained ministers, three licensed ministers, four licensed missionaries, and six more elementary school teachers. In addition, some departments were already organized, such as Publications, Education, and Youth. The headquarters of the mission returned to its first address, 1120 Pedro I Street, downtown Fortaleza. Finally, the field had five organized churches and 724 Adventist members,⁶² and the Central Church of Fortaleza was inaugurated and operated at the same address as the mission.⁶³

In November 1956 Pastor José Bessa held a series of meetings in the District of Aerolândia in Fortaleza. At the end of the work, 56 people were enrolled in the church's Sabbath School, and 20 were baptized to form the neighborhood Adventist group.⁶⁴ In 1958 Pastor Bessa began another series in the city of Juazeiro do Norte, in the Cariri region, south of Ceará.⁶⁵ The series, however, was marked by religious persecutions against Pastor Bessa by more radical local religions.⁶⁶

The 1960s began with a positive balance for the North Coast Mission. In March 1960 the churches of the city of General Sampaio and the neighborhood of Aerolândia in Fortaleza were inaugurated. The Church of General Sampaio was assisted by Francisco Severino Mendes, an Adventist who was baptized in 1956 with his family. With the desire to have a place where members could worship God, he decided to build a chapel.⁶⁷ In the Central Church of Fortaleza, the Adventist School Pedro I was headed by teachers Maria Teresa da Costa e Silva and Carmen Cunha. By October 1960 the school had more than thirty students enrolled.⁶⁸

The North Coast Mission's first biennial assembly was held in 1963 in the city of Fortaleza.⁶⁹ In the same decade, Adventist social work began to develop its activities in Ceará. In 1965 Waxes Johnson's Company donated a mobile clinic to the North Coast Mission for medical and welfare work within the state.⁷⁰ The following year the Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Service (S.A.W.S),⁷¹ led by the Dorcas Society⁷² of Fortaleza, received donations of various materials from the military school of Fortaleza for the construction of an assistance center. The donations were obtained with the help of the First Lady of the state of Ceará, Luiza Távora.⁷³ In 1968 the city of Fortaleza had four organized churches: Central, Aerolândia, Santa Fé, and Carlito Pamplona.⁷⁴

In the same year the region of Cariri in Juazeiro do Norte received more intense evangelistic efforts. An Adventist merchant named Cicero Miguel Rodrigues came from the city of Pesqueira, in the state of Pernambuco, to Ceará. Together with his family, and another family of a merchant named Manoel Ludugerius, Rodrigues formed the first group of Adventists in the city of Juazeiro do Norte, and together the group rented a building on São Pedro's Street, in downtown Juazeiro, near the municipal market.⁷⁵

In order to reinforce the work, in 1969 Pastor Josias Castro was sent by the North Coast Mission to work in Juazeiro do Norte. By the end of that year, the city had a Sabbath School of 41 members—17 of them Adventists—and there were five candidates for baptism.⁷⁶ On the occasion, the merchant Manoel Ludugerius was baptized along with his son Gilbert and his wife Nerci. The ceremony took place on November 29, 1969, and was officiated by Pastor Charles J. Griffin. The three were the first Adventists to be baptized in Juazeiro do Norte.⁷⁷

In the early 1970s the North Coast Mission had 15 organized churches and 5,886 Adventists,⁷⁸ and 1,325 of them were baptized in 1969.⁷⁹ Even with the Adventist group formed in Juazeiro, the region was still a challenging field. For this reason the North Coast Mission decided to focus its efforts on the evangelization of this region, with the aim of definitely establishing a church in the city. For this reason, in the second half of 1970, Pastor Harold Seidl was sent to Juazeiro do Norte where he held a series of meetings at Cine Eldorado, on 427 Santa Luzia Street.⁸⁰

Another city that began to be evangelized in 1971 was Sobral, in the northwest of Ceará. There, Pastor Raimundo Lima directed an evangelistic series for four weeks. The city was highlighted as being “one of the arsenals of Catholicism in the state of Ceará,” and the “seat of a bishopric.” Soon after, a class of Bible studies began in the city, and in July of that year 50 people were ready for baptism.⁸¹

In 1973 new steps were taken to advance Adventist education in Ceará. The North Coast Mission acquired a piece of land 100m by 25m in the center of Fortaleza for the construction of the Adventist Educational Center Pedro I (CEAPI).⁸² Adventist Social work in Ceará also intensified its work, and in 1975 the North Coast Mission received two mobile clinics through an agreement with Funrural.⁸³ The two ambulances were to operate in the cities of Crateús, in the west of the state, and Quixadá, in the central region of Ceará. In addition to an ambulance, the mobile clinics still had a dormitory and a truck to transport the power generator.⁸⁴

The Adventist work continued to grow and, two years later (1977), the church of CEAPI was inaugurated.⁸⁵ In the same year, Pastor José Bessa returned to Fortaleza and held a series of meetings in the neighborhood of Monte Castelo. A temple was lifted in the area to serve the evangelistic series. On October 30, as a result of the series, 48 people were baptized, and the sixth church in Ceará was organized.⁸⁶ In the same year, the canvasser's home in Fortaleza was inaugurated. The site had the capacity to house 15 canvassers and was aimed at students who came from afar to work in the Ceará capital.⁸⁷ In addition to all evangelistic efforts, the North Coast Mission arrived in January 1980 with 28 organized churches and 14,417 members throughout its territory.⁸⁸

During the Triennial Assembly of the North Coast Mission in February 1982, the field leadership found that of the 384 municipalities covered by the mission in the states of Ceará, Piauí, and Maranhão, 303 had no Adventist presence. Thus, the mission has reached these locations as a priority.⁸⁹ One of them was the city of Quixadá, 80 miles from Fortaleza. There, Pastor John Claudius do Nascimento carried out an evangelistic series in December 1981, resulting in the formation of a church in the city. Then plans began for the construction of an Adventist school. A plot of land was donated by one member of the Adventist Church and two others by the city hall of Quixadá. A year later (1982) the cornerstone of the new school was laid.⁹⁰ While it was being built, the students gathered at the premises of the Central Adventist Church of Quixadá on Eptácio Pessoa Street.⁹¹

In October 1985 the headquarters of the North Coast mission changed again, this time to 330 Guilherme Moreira Street, in the District of Fátima, in Fortaleza.⁹² In March 1986 delegates from the entire mission met in the Triennial Assembly and by the division of the North Coast Mission created a new field, formed by the state of Maranhão only.⁹³ The following year (1987) the Adventist college of Quixadá, Arlete Afonso Adventist School, began operating.⁹⁴

The division of the North Coast Mission territory was approved by the South American Division at its annual average council in June 1988.⁹⁵ Thus, the state of Maranhão was dismembered from the North Coast Mission in order to form the Maranhão Mission of the SDA. The new field began operating on July 30, 1988, with its headquarters in the city of São Luís, capital of Maranhão.⁹⁶ With the division of the field, the North Coast Mission

began the year 1990 with 26 organized churches and 8,993 Adventists, and with a population of 8,914,200 people to be reached in the states of Ceará and Piauí.⁹⁷

Despite all the missionary efforts, in the 1990s there were 112 Ceará municipalities without an Adventist presence.⁹⁸ However, women have played a very important role in overcoming this challenge. A good example of this involvement was the commemoration of the centenary of the Women's Ministry in the state of Ceará. Sister Iraci Castelo Cunha, retired teacher, set the target of evangelizing 150 cities. Through her team 120 cities were reached by the gospel, and 80 churches were built in cities such as Milagres, Uruburetama, São Joaquim, Trairi, and Umirim.⁹⁹ In 1996, with the creation of the Northeast Brazil Union Mission, the North Coast Mission ceased to be part of the North Brazil Union, moving to the administration of the Northeast Brazil Union Mission.¹⁰⁰

From 1991 to 1999 the team of "Gideon's 300," led by Iraci, reached 164 locations. In all, 123 churches were built, and 41 groups gathered in rented or borrowed rooms while waiting for the construction of their temples. Added to these blessings, 6,000 people were baptized.¹⁰¹ Thus, in early 2000, the North Coast Mission reached the number of 77 organized churches and 24,590 Adventists, almost four times that was registered in the early 1990s.¹⁰²

Within 2003 and 2011, through the work of the members of the North Coast Mission, 58,290 people were baptized.¹⁰³ As of 2008, the North Coast Mission started operating on 559 Joaquim de Melo Street in Rodolfo Teófilo neighborhood in Fortaleza (the present ACe address).¹⁰⁴ In the same year the Adventist school of Fortaleza, already called Paulo César Afonso Adventist School, and Arlete Afonso Adventist School, in Quixadá, were reinaugurated.¹⁰⁵ Three years later, in 2011, the North Coast Mission changed its status to the North Coast Conference (ACN).¹⁰⁶

In August 2012 the Hope Channel-Brazil signal reached the city of Fortaleza, and through its programs several people sought the church and gave their lives to Christ through baptism.¹⁰⁷ Within 2012 and 2015, evangelism in the state continued to be developed, having registered a total of 34,001 new baptisms and 76,276 members within this period.¹⁰⁸ In view of the achievements granted by God to His church, the North Coast Conference proposed to the South American Division the division of its field and the creation of the Piauí Mission. At the North Coast Conference extraordinary assembly held in March 2015, the division of the field was approved by the 84 delegates present. In 2016 the Piauí Mission began operating, with headquarters on Rua Acesio do Rego Monteiro, nº 1977, neighborhood Ininga, in the city of Teresina, State of Piauí.¹⁰⁹ Also in 2015 the North Coast Conference committed to helping finance the new mission for a period of five years.¹¹⁰

With the dismemberment of the states of Maranhão in 1989 and Piauí in 2015, the name North Coast Conference was changed to Ceara Conference, as it remains today. Its territory was limited to the state of Ceará.

¹¹¹ Evidently, with the original field divided into three distinct missionary fields, the number of baptisms was proportional to 18,862 and the number of Adventists to 50,639 in 2018.¹¹²

Since its foundation there has been an intense involvement of the Ceara Conference in several missionary programs of the Adventist Church at the national level. Projects such as the Caleb Mission,¹¹³ Holy Week Evangelism,¹¹⁴ and the annual spring baptisms event¹¹⁵ have been aligned with the Ceara Conference incentives to work in missionary pairs and Bible classes. The small groups¹¹⁶ are divided into two missionary groups, and each pair is responsible for the evangelization of a specific street, offering at least four Bible studies. Quarterly meetings of small groups take place so that the districts celebrate the results of this evangelization through testimonies and baptisms.¹¹⁷

The Impacto Esperança (Hope Impact) is a project that mobilizes the church completely in the distribution of literature. In 2019 about three hundred fifty thousand units of the book "Esperança para a Família" (Hope for Family) were distributed. The Ceará Conference develops a work that is not only limited to the delivery of the book but also by the relationship that occurs before, during, and after the impact. Researches are carried out in the community in order to know the peculiarities of each place before the distribution and, after the delivery of the book another research is carried out to find out if the person has read the book and which chapter has impressed him or her the most. All in order to find the right time and subject to offer Bible studies.¹¹⁸

In the area of assistance, the Ceara Conference maintains the Potyrom Project: united hands to help. The headquarters of the project is located on 81 Martinópolis Street in the Benfica neighborhood in Fortaleza. The project, which aims to help people living on the streets, has existed since 2017. It is a house where the needy finds items of personal hygiene, clothing, and food. Daily, 60 to 80 meals are offered. As important as clothes and food are, these needy people are blessed by the love and welcome they receive. The service is provided by volunteers. With the blessing of God, lives have already been transformed, people have already left the streets, and some have been baptized. From 2017 to 2019 it has served 55,200 meals, donated 18,080 pieces of clothing, and has given 2,100 haircuts. As a result of this work, seven people were baptized.¹¹⁹

The gospel has advanced through remote and difficult places, even in places that are isolated during the dry season. In the last four years, twelve Adventist groups have been opened in these localities. In addition to geography, the ACe faces financial challenges, as the drought period hits the finance of all social classes. Great businessmen of the state went bankrupt, and this had an impact on the growth of the church. However, in recent years, the number of faithful members in tithes and offerings has increased greatly in the field, enabling the progress of God's work and the planting of many churches in that territory.¹²⁰

In the future the Ceara Conference, through its leaders, plans to consolidate the project "Hope Leaders," emphasizing discipleship and encouraging each member to work in missionary pairs and small groups. The goal is to have everyone involved in the mission, preparing each other for the encounter with Christ.¹²¹

In the educational area, the goal is to establish a new school in Fortaleza and reform the one that is already in operation, the Fortaleza Adventist School. In the canvassing, it is planned to increase the number of effective canvassers from 10 to 40. And finally, the ACe plans to reach 700 churches in differentiated neighborhoods,

such as Mucuripe and Cocó, which are noble neighborhoods of the city of Fortaleza. The forecast is that, with the growth, soon the division of the field will bring about the Ceará North Mission.¹²²

Whether financial or cultural, there will always be challenges to face when working for the Lord. Although some of them limit the ability to plant new churches, the Ceara Conference Adventists know that victory is certain!

God “is the leader of this movement, and He is not taken by surprise [by] any condition that arises in the world.”

¹²³ After all, “we have nothing to fear in the future unless we forget the way God has led us.”¹²⁴

List of Officers¹²⁵

Presidents: R. A. Wilcox (1938-1946); Gustavo S. Storch (1948-1955); Waldemar Ehlers (1956-1959); D. J. Sandstrom (1960); W. S. Lima (1961-1963); P. S. Seidl (1966-1968); C. J. Griffin (1969-1971); Valdomiro Reis (1974-1976); Luiz S. Melo (1977-1978); Dorvalino R. de Souza (1979-1984), Nelson de Oliveira Duarte (1985-1988); João Claudio do Nascimento (1889-1991); and Samuel de Souza Ramos (1992-1996); Geovani Souto de Queiroz (1997); Jonatan Bezerra de Souza (1999-2005); Izeas dos Santos Cardoso (2006 to 2010); and Eliezer de Melo Fontes Junior (2011); Lucas Alves Bezerra (2012-2014), Nelson Jose da Silva Filho (2015-2019); Onildo de Oliveira Lopes (2019-present).

Secretaries: R. A. Wilcox (1943-1944); C. Fonseca (1946-1949); B. C. Kalbermatter (1950-1954); B. R. Cavalheiro (1955-1958); O. A. Silva (1959-1960); Carlos Stancher (1961-1962); Valdomiro Fraga (1963-1965); Pedro Gonzales (1966-1970); D. D. Amorim (1971-1971); A. L. Pimenta (1972 to 1975); Osmar Reis, 1976); Joel G. Smith (1977-1981); Rui, L. de Freitas (1982-1983); Hélio Luiz Grellmann (1984); Walkirio Dolzanes Kettle (1985-1986); Sofonias De Gracia Quintero (1987), Fabrício Mendez Cruz (1988-1992); Anastácio: Cardoso Ximenes (1993 to 1997); Gilmar Filho Silveira (1998-2003); Celso Aparecido dos Santos (2004-2005); Demir Dener Di Berardino (2006); Antonio Ramos de Brito (2007-2008); Eliezer de Melo Fontes Junior (2009-2010); Emerson Nunes de Freitas (2011 to 2013), José Kellyson Silva de Oliveira (2014-2015); Fausto Carmo dos Santos (2016-2019); Otávio Barreto (2019-present).

Treasurers: R. A. Wilcox (1943-1944); C. Fonseca (1946-1949); B. C. Kalbermatter (1950-1954); B. R. Cavalheiro (1955-1958); O. A. Silva (1959-1960); Carlos Stancher (1961-1962); Valdomiro Fraga (1963-1965); Pedro Gonzales (1966-1970); D. D. Amorim (1971); A. L. Pimenta (1972-1975); Osmar Reis (1976); Joel G. Smith (1977-1981); Rui, L. de Freitas, (1982-1983); Hélio Luiz Grellmann (1984); Walkirio Dolzanes Kettle (1985-1987); Fabrício Mendez Cruz (1988—1991); Anastácio Cardoso Ximenes (1992-1997); Gilmar Filho Silveira (1998-2003); Celso Aparecido dos Santos (2004-2005); Demir Dener Di Berardino (2006-2007); Abimael Correia de Bastos (2008 to 2010); Glauber Cassiano (2011-2012); Fausto Carmo dos Santos (2013-2019); Eliabe Benedicto (2019-present).¹²⁶

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NOTES

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4. "The Pathfinders Club has officially existed since 1950, it is an official program of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, where boys and girls aged 10 to 15, from different social classes, color, religion, gather, usually once a week, for activities supervised outdoors in order to develop intelligences that are outside the school curriculum: health care, acquiring skills, developing talents, responsibility, self-esteem, respect, love for one's neighbor and nature." Accessed on January 16, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2PrTWSg>.
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16. "East Brazil Union Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1920), 187.
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18. Rubens Lessa, *Construtores de esperança: na trilha dos pioneiros adventistas da Amazônia* [Builders of hope: on the trail of the Adventist pioneers of the Amazon] (Tatuí, SP: Brazil Publishing House, 2015), 31.
19. "Lower Amazonas Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1927), 197.
20. Floyd Greenleaf, *Terra de Esperança: o crescimento da Igreja Adventista na América do Sul* [Land of hope: the growth of the Adventist Church in South America] (Tatuí, SP: Brazil Publishing House, 2011), 353.
21. See article "Rolling Clinic" of this encyclopedia; "North Brazil Union Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1929), 204.
22. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church canvasser is the missionary who "develops his ministry by acquiring and selling to the public publications edited and approved by the church, with the aim of transmitting to his fellows the eternal Gospel that brings salvation and physical and spiritual well-being." Accessed on August 30, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2J6tY1I>.
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28. O. S. Streithorst, *Leo Halliwell na Amazônia* [Leo Halliwell in Amazon] (Santo André, SP: Brazil Publishing House, 1979), 112.
29. Ibid.
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36. Jorge Lobo, "Écos da Missão Baixo Amazonas" [Echoes of Lower-Amazon Mission], *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], December 1936, 12.
37. Minutes of the South American Division, December 1936, vote no. 4682-36.
38. Jorge Pereira Lobo, "Notícias Geraes" [General News], *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], July 1937, 10-11.
39. Brazil Census 2018, Paraíba, cities and states, IBGE, accessed on July 22, 2019, <https://bit.ly/2YtqCAB>; Census of Brazil 2018, Maranhão, Cities and States, IBGE, accessed on 22 July 2019, <https://bit.ly/33aEX3w>; Brazil Census 2018, Ceará, cities and states, IBGE, accessed on July 22, 2019, <https://bit.ly/2MQelcO>.
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51. H. O. Olson, "Experiências da União Norte-Brasileira" [North Brazil Union Conference Experiences], *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], April 1941, 12.
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65. Ribamar Diniz, *O Adventismo na Terra do Padre Cícero* [The Adventism in the Land of Father Cicero] (Brasília, DF: Brazilian Creationist Society, 2012), 176.
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110. Minutes of the North Coast Conference, May 24, 2015.
111. "Ceara Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Nampa, ID.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2017), 320.
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113. Caleb Mission project is a volunteer program, social service, and witnessing program that challenges the Adventist youth to dedicate their vacations to evangelism in places where there's no Adventist presence, to strengthen the small congregations and gain new people for the kingdom of God." Accessed on October 9, 2019, <http://bit.ly/2HRpvRi>.
114. "Harvest evangelism in Holy Week is a very special time to present Jesus and the life we find in him through the word of God. The goal of evangelism is to remember the sacrifice, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in favor of mankind." Accessed on November 27, 2019, <https://bit.ly/2uMWoue>.
115. "Spring Baptism was created by Pastor Ademar Quint in Rio de Janeiro, and it takes place annually in churches. The aim is to encourage juvenile and young people to give themselves to Jesus. In 2013, this event celebrated 50 years, and more than one million people are already baptized on this special date." Accessed on January 7, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2s3e0RL>.
116. "Small Group is a weekly gathering of people who, under coordination of a leader, seek spiritual, relational and evangelistic growth. Accessed on January 21, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2NtcXj7>.
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