



South Espírito Santo Conference headquarters, 2020.
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South Espirito Santo Conference

LUCAS VÍTOR ALVES RODRIGUES SENA, LEÔNIDAS VERNEQUE GUEDES, AND RUDINEY COELHO SOUZA

Lucas Vítor Alves Rodrigues Sena

Leônidas Verneque Guedes

Rudiney Coelho Souza

The South Espírito Santo Conference (ASES) is an administrative unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church located in the territory of the Southeast Brazil Union Conference (USEB). Its headquarters is located at 155 Jaime Pacheco Machado Street, Zip Code 29146-514, in the Campo Grande neighborhood, in Cariacica city, state of Espírito Santo, Brazil.

ASES covers the entire southern region of the state of Espírito Santo, in southeastern Brazil. Its mission field includes the following cities: Vila Velha, Cachoeiro do Itapemirim, Cariacica, Guarapari, Viana, Domingos Martins, Afonso Cláudio, Santa Maria, Marataízes, Castelo, Guaçuí, Alegre, Iúna, Anchieta, Mimoso do Sul, Ibatiba, Venda Nova, Santa Tereza, Piúma, Vargem Alta, Muniz Freire, Marechal Floriano, Muqui, Alfredo Chaves, Itaguaçu, Iconha, Irupi, Conceição do Castelo, Brejetuba, Santa Leopoldina, Atílio Vivaqua, Jerônimo Monteiro, Rio Novo do Sul, Presidente Kennedy, Laranja da Terra, Itarana, São José do Calçado, Ibitirama, Apicá, Dolores do Rio Preto, Divino São Lourenço and Mucuri. The total population of the region is 2,049,139 people, and the number of Adventists is 28,534; and are organized in 41 pastoral districts and 316 congregations. Thus, the average in the region is one Adventist per

72 inhabitants.

Within ASES territory there are three school units for Adventist education, which serve 1,427 students. They are: the IBES Adventist Educational Center, located at 358 Assis Chateaubriand Square, in the city of Vila Velha, with 408 students; the IBES Kids Space, located at 29 José Ricardo Street, also in Vila Velha, with 84 students; and the Campo Grande Adventist Academy, at 445 Alice Coutinho Avenue, in the city of Cariacica, with 935 students enrolled.

ASES also maintains the Adventist Training and Recreation Center of Espírito Santo (CATRES), located at 511 Pastor Simão Pedro Manske, in Praia do Morro (Hill Beach), in the city of Guarapari, Espírito Santo coastline. CATRES has a capacity for 400 people in the chalets and 800 in the camping area, and annually serves an average of 12,000 people. The conference also counts on New Time Bookstore, located at 215 Expedito Garcia Avenue, in Campo Grande neighborhood, in the city of Cariacica. The conference manages two units of the Adventist Community Development Center (CADEC): CADEC I, at Amâncio Pimenta Street, São Vicente neighborhood, in the city of Afonso Cláudio; and CADEC II, at 20 Afonso Cláudio Avenue, Terra Vermelha neighborhood, in Vila Velha!¹

To assist its entire area of activity ASES has 214 servers. Of these, 138 are employees, 2 are credentialed workers, and 23 are religious employees. The conference also employs 51 pastors, of whom 44 are ordained and 7 are licensed. The city of Afonso Cláudio, in the ASES territory, also has a New Time Radio station, which can be heard through the 93.9 FM frequency.

The Origin of the Work of the SDA Church in the Conference Territory

Adventist work in Espírito Santo began in the 1890s, when the canvasser Albert B. Stauffer was sent by the General Conference to work in Brazil in May 1893. Coming from Uruguay, the canvasser arrived in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, far south of the country and, from there, went up toward the countryside German colonies in Brazil, in the states of São Paulo and Espírito Santo.² In 1894 Frank Westphal, the first Adventist pastor ordained, arrived in Brazil.³ At the same time, Stauffer arrived in Espírito Santo, which until then was a large German colony inhabited by Lutherans from the Pomerania region, in northern Germany.

In the region of Santa Maria de Jetibá, then belonging to the city of Santa Leopoldina, the canvasser sold the book *The Great Controversy* in the German version to the settlers. Immediately the reading caused a turmoil in the region, and the settlers who were converted began to be persecuted, being called “Verflutchte Sabatisten” (“cursed Sabbatarians,” in German).⁴ In his biography Pastor Gustavo Storch reported that his grandmother took 25 slaps from a Lutheran pastor just for allowing an Adventist worship service to take place in her home.⁵ Despite the problems and persecution, Stauffer did not give up and continued to sell Adventist literature. Due to his persistence, 23 people were baptized on December 14, 1895, by Pastor Huldreich F. Graf. The baptism included the father of the pioneer Guilherme Frederico Denz and the grandparents and parents of Gustavo Storch. The third Adventist church in Brazil was born in the village of Santa Maria de Jetibá.⁶

In 1897 a new Adventist church was founded in Serra Pelada region, which is now a district in the city of Afonso Cláudio. The place came to be inhabited exclusively by German Adventists, who had come from Santa Maria de Jetibá, which was just over 38 km from Serra Pelada. The region was considered “a Canaan, a true paradise, (. . .) a miniature Germany,” and about thirty people gathered there, among them Emílio Zahn, Guilherme Denz, Júlio Keppke, and Carlos Grünwald, the first Adventists to arrive in the region.⁷

In 1906 another congregation was established, this time on the banks of Córrego do Manteiga, today belonging to the city of Laranja da Terra. This one is considered the third church organized in Espírito Santo. When it was created, it had 16 members, but four years later, in 1910, there were already 24 Adventists there. There were among its first members the families of Guilherme Welmer, Franz Westphal, and Arno Braun.⁸

In 1910 the fourth Adventist church in the state was established, which is located at Córrego do Laranjinha, having as pioneers the Becker and Kühl families, also German immigrants.⁹ In 1912 new Adventists arrived in the Córrego do Manteiga region. The church was officially organized on July 6, 1912, and inaugurated on May 24, 1913.¹⁰ In November 1913, the Espírito Santo churches conducted a “General Assembly,” with the participation of Pastors F. W. Spies and Henry Meyer, in Serra Pelada. At the end of the meeting, six people were baptized, and the church of Serra Pelada has grown to 84 members. That fact motivated Spies to declare that the church could be considered “currently the largest of our churches in Brazil.”¹¹

At the same time, Adventist education took its first steps in the region. In Serra Pelada a parish school was inaugurated in November 1913, with Professor Jacob Peterson as the director. The school year began on November 1, 1913, and ended on May 15, 1914, since, during the other vacation months, students were supposed to help their parents on the farm.¹² In 1914 there were many people moving to places like Serra Pelada, Laranjinha, and Laranja da Terra; among those, people from Santa Maria de Jetibá church causing a great loss of members.¹³ For this reason, decades later (at the end of 1971), the church officially ceased its activities.¹⁴

In November 1915, during the Autumn Council of the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference Committee in the city of Loma Linda, California, the leaders and delegates of the countries where the church was present, approved the creation of the South American Division. To preside the new administrative unit, the leadership voted for Oliver Montgomery, who arrived in South America in 1916.¹⁵ In the first month of that year, days after the new president's arrival, delegates from across the continent met in the city of La Plata, Argentina, where they decided to divide the Brazilian Union Conference into two new unions: the North Brazil Union Mission (now known as the Southeast Brazil

Union Conference), headquartered in Rio de Janeiro, covering the entire territory to the north of São Paulo, including the state of Espírito Santo; and the South Brazil Union Mission (which continued as the Brazilian Union Conference, which currently has the status of Central Brazil Union Conference), covering the churches in the states of São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul.¹⁶

The Adventist message continued to spread throughout the state of Espírito Santo. In 1917 Henrique Völz, the first Adventist to settle in Córrego do Ribeirão, arrived in that region, coming from Santa Maria de Jetibá.¹⁷ In 1918 new families from Serra Pelada arrived in the Ribeirão village, starting an Adventist congregation that met at Henrique Völz's house.¹⁸ A year later the North Brazil Union Conference was also established in Brazil, with Henry J. Meyer as president.¹⁹ The union had five mission fields: Pernambuco Mission, headquartered in Recife in the state of Pernambuco; East Minas Mission, headquartered in Juiz de Fora in the state of Minas Gerais; East Brazil Mission, headquartered in Salvador in the state of Bahia; Rio de Janeiro Mission, headquartered in Rio de Janeiro in the state of Rio de Janeiro; and the Espírito Santo Mission, headquartered in Vitória in the state of Espírito Santo, with John Boehm as president.²⁰

While Adventist work was advancing in the Espírito Santo countryside, the capital, Vitória, still did not have an Adventist presence. Thus, in early 1919 the union sent four workers to the capital of Espírito Santo: the canvassers Paulo Schultz and Júlia Apolinário, the Evangelist Pedro Alexandre, and Pastor John Boehm, the director of the Espírito Santo Mission. The first Adventists in the metropolitan region of Vitória held their Sabbath School meetings under a quichabeira tree, at Inhoá beach, in the city of Vila Velha (separated from Vitória just by a bridge). In fact, the first meetings in the capital region took place in Vila Velha.²¹

In the 1920s there were several inaugurations in the Espírito Santo Mission territory. In 1921, the Laranjinha temple was officially inaugurated in the rural region of the city of Laranja da Terra. The congregation started in the 1900s was formed entirely by Germans and had its first preaching in Portuguese only in 1919, by Pastor Henrique Stoehr.²² In 1924 Serra Pelada hosted the Annual Evangelistic Series of Espírito Santo, which was attended by 200 Adventists from all over the state, resulting in the baptism of nine people. Thus, the church of Serra Pelada had grown to 100 members.²³ In October 1925 the church of the Ribeirão village was organized, with 21 members. Those members belonged to families like Zahn, Seidl, Stieg, Possemoser, Kaufmann, Kefler, Küster, and Lorentz, all of German origin.²⁴

Also in 1925, the first headquarters of the Espírito Santo Mission was established. Although its mailbox was located at Vitória,²⁵ its headquarters were located at Vila Velha, as well as the first church in the metropolitan region of Vitória.²⁶ At the end of 1926, the Espírito Santo Mission had seven organized churches and 590 Adventists.²⁷ An elementary school also started to operate in Vila Velha. There is no record of when it started exactly, but it is known that one of its students, in 1927, was the physician Jessé Torres Dourado.²⁸

In 1927 Rio de Janeiro Mission and Espírito Santo Mission were reorganized to better assist the needs of the Adventist Church in the region. Thus, the state of Espírito Santo came under the administration of the Rio-Espírito Santo Mission, which covered the northern part of the state of Rio de Janeiro and the entire state of Espírito Santo.²⁹ Initially, the Rio-Espírito Santo Mission headquarters was located at Campos dos Goytacazes, in the state of Rio de Janeiro,³⁰ but in 1929 it moved to 53 Capixaba Avenue, in Vitória.³¹ And one more time, in the beginning of 1930, the headquarters was transferred to 16 Pedro Palácios Street, also in the capital of Espírito Santo.³²

In 1928 the Adventist message had already reached other places in the south of Espírito Santo. In September of that year, pastors Henrique Stoehr and Guilherme Denz visited the cities of Alegre and Cachoeiro de Itapemirim. In the latter city, Denz and Stoehr baptized two people and conducted a Holy Supper. At the time, the city had eight baptized members and many people interested in the Adventist message.³³

In 1930 a new church was built in the city of Serra Pelada, on the farm of the pioneer Carlos Ost, 3 km away from the first church established in the early 1920s.³⁴ The following year (1931) Serra Pelada received a canvassing course held by the Rio-Espírito Santo Mission, led by Raul C. de Araújo. On the occasion 14 canvassers participated in the activity, which had the support of Benedito Silveira, Emílio Gutzeit, and Conrado and Henrique Stoehr as speakers.³⁵ In 1932 the Rio-Espírito Santo Mission had 11 organized churches and 932 Adventists.³⁶

In the 1940s there definitely were several churches established in Espírito Santo. In 1941, for example, there was already a considerable group of believers such as the families of Carlos Storch, Davi Stieg, and Waldemar Lopes in the city of Laranja da Terra. The group gathered at Carlos Stabnow's house, and as it grew, it started to operate at Stabnow's warehouse.³⁷ Still in 1941, the temple in Ribeirão was renovated, which was inaugurated for the first time in 1925. The old temple had become too small to support so many people, and when it was reinaugurated, it was considered "the most beautiful in the entire district."³⁸ In the Grande Vitória region, in May 1942, the church of Vila Velha was inaugurated. The building was able to accommodate 150 people, and its land was donated to the Adventist Church by the city mayor.³⁹ Three years later there were reports about the church of Vila Velha as a strong congregation in missionary work, standing out in the Rio-Espírito Santo Mission territory.⁴⁰

In 1943 the city of Cachoeiro de Itapemirim received a series of meetings, carried out by Pastors Alfredo Meier and Geraldo de Oliveira. For the standards of the time, the series had an excellent audience: the theater where the meetings were being held had a seating capacity of 500, but almost seven hundred attended daily. And it was in the same period that a Sabbath School started there with 60 people.⁴¹

In the city of Afonso Cláudio, in 1946, an Adventist, Valentim Naves, started a Sabbath School class at his home. He had been baptized in 1944 by Pastor Abraham Harder, along with his wife and daughter.⁴² Still in the state countryside, the Ribeirão Church began to organize an academy that offered not only elementary education but also

a gymnasium. 1975, in Brazil, gymnasium referred to middle school). In March 1947 the Ribeirão Academy was inaugurated, which had a school building, two residences, and a chapel. Offering the four years of elementary education and the first two years of middle school, in its inauguration, the academy already had 70 students enrolled.⁴³

In the same period, the Serra Pelada church remained one of the largest in the Rio-Espírito Santo Mission, having an elementary school and an infirmary.⁴⁴ And in November 1948, the church in the city of Laranja da Terra was inaugurated and organized, with the presence of Pastor Abraham C. Harder, then president of Rio-Espírito Santo Mission.⁴⁵ This church was 8 by 12 meters at the time. Decades later (in 1975) a new church was inaugurated, with a capacity for about one thousand people, measuring 14x26 meters.⁴⁶ At the end of 1949, the Rio-Espírito Santo Mission had 25 organized churches and 2,390 Adventist members, most of whom lived in the state of Espírito Santo.⁴⁷ In Grande Vitória there were also three elementary schools, two in the current ASES mission field: Vila Velha Adventist Elementary School, with Dilma Gomes as teacher;⁴⁸ and Campo Grande Adventist Elementary School in Cariacica, whose teacher was Alice Storch.⁴⁹

The 1950s marked changes in southern Espírito Santo. In 1951 Valentim Naves and Pedro Antônio de Carvalho and another Adventist who lived in Afonso Cláudio purchased land in the city where they built a church. That same year the temple cornerstone was laid. The lot was steep and, for this reason, church members built a shed where they met. The shed was inaugurated in 1953, on the same day that the church was definitely organized with 40 members.⁵⁰ In 1973, after 20 years of meeting in that shed, the Adventists from Afonso Cláudio inaugurated their temple.⁵¹ Six years later another church was inaugurated in another location, the Cachoeiro do Itapemirim congregation.⁵²

At the end of 1954, the Rio-Espírito Santo Mission had 31 organized churches and 3,490 Adventists.⁵³ With such a large number of Adventists and organized churches for the standards of that period, the field needed to be divided. Thus, in 1955, the mission was reorganized, changing its name to Espírito Santo Conference, covering the northeast of the state of Rio de Janeiro, the eastern end of the state of Minas Gerais, and the state of Espírito Santo.⁵⁴

In 1956 a new series of meetings was held in the city of Cachoeiro do Itapemirim, this time under the leadership of Pastor Dourival de Souza Lima, worker at Espírito Santo Conference. As a result of the series, in April 1956 there were already 20 people baptized.⁵⁵ During the 1957 vacation, Pastor Santiago Schmidt started volunteer work of evangelism in Guarapari, at the southern coastline of Espírito Santo. Schmidt carried out evangelistic meetings, including city officials. His initial work yielded good results: four people baptized in the city, as well as a baptismal class and a Sabbath School class with about twenty members.⁵⁶

A year later, in 1958, the Adventist Church bought land on Praia do Morro, in Guarapari. The land was one hundred thousand square meters, facing the sea, and there, during the 1958 carnival, the first Cultural Camp of the Espírito Santo Conference was held, targeting young Adventists in the state. Later the land became the Espírito Santo Adventist Training and Recreation Center (CATRES).⁵⁷ The 1950s ended positively for the Espírito Santo Conference: 46 organized churches and 5,139 members by the end of 1959.⁵⁸

The 1960s started with good news for the Espírito Santo people. In September 1960, Pastor Manuel Banqué started a series of evangelistic meetings in the IBES neighborhood, in Vila Velha. The series had an excellent reception among the neighborhood population, so much so that three meetings were held daily: the first, for children; the second, for adults; and the third was a Bible class. The series also had the participation of the choir Cantores de São (Zion Singers), from the church of Vila Velha. At the first meetings, about sixty people decided to be baptized.⁵⁹

In November 1960, the state of Espírito Santo had the largest number of Adventists in Brazil, with an average of one Adventist per 320 inhabitants, up to 3,100 members.⁶⁰ In 1961 there was already an organized group of Adventists in Barra de Itapemirim, which is currently a neighborhood in the city of Marataízes. The group consisted of 42 people enrolled in the Sabbath School. Of these, 13 had already been baptized by Pastor Geraldo Ivanicska.⁶¹ In the following year, the Vila Velha city inaugurated another Adventist temple. Inaugurated in the first half of 1962, the Campo Grande church was the third to be set up in the metropolitan region of Vitória, with a capacity to accommodate 700 people.⁶² A year later, in July 1963, the temple of Vila Velha Central Church was inaugurated with a capacity for 460 people.⁶³

It was also in the 1960s that the Adventist message began to reach other places in Grande Vitória. An example is the formation of the Garrido group, a neighborhood on the outskirts of Vila Velha. In April 1964 the first Sabbath School meeting took place in Garrido. The local Sabbath School later became a group, which in June 1966 had 68 baptized Adventists.⁶⁴ In the same period, Pastor Paulo Stabenow, and the worker Célia Oliveira and layman Braz Neves conducted a series of meetings in the neighborhood of Porto de Santana, on the outskirts of Cariacica, which resulted in the inauguration of the local church in 1967, when 11 people were baptized. In early 1968 the church had 25 regular members, and another 70 members enrolled in Sabbath School.⁶⁵

In the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Brazil, social assistance has been side by side with evangelistic work, and it was not different in Espírito Santo. In July 1969 a team from the São Torquato church, in the city of Vila Velha, organized the social assistance group "Os Bons Samaritanos" (The Good Samaritans). The group's goal was to teach a profession to the community around the church. The first course to be offered was the operator of drills, conducted by Amâncio Soares.⁶⁶ All the work carried out in the previous years in the Espírito Santo Conference, which also started to manage a region in southern Bahia, resulted in 58 organized churches and 11,561 Adventists in January 1970.⁶⁷

The 1970s began with the advancement of the Adventist message through Espírito Santo media. At Christmas 1970 the Maranata choir, from Campo Grande Adventist Church, in Cariacica, was invited to sing on two of the programs of

Espírito Santo Radio, as well as on Vitória Radio and TV, in addition to a program broadcast in German on Capixaba Radio.⁶⁸

In 1972 after the Espírito Santo Conference underwent a new administrative reformulation, it began to cover part of the eastern region of the state of Minas Gerais, the southern region of the Jequitinhonha River, in the state of Bahia, the northeast region of the state of Rio de Janeiro, and the entire state of Espírito Santo. Therefore, the name was changed to East Conference.⁶⁹ In the first half of 1972, the East Conference had 364 baptisms,⁷⁰ reaching, in 1973, 58 organized churches in its mission field and 13,865 Adventists.⁷¹

The 1970s also marked the beginning of medical missionary work in the south of the state. In August 1973 Pastor Moisés Dias de Carvalho was called to take over the work of the East Conference Mobile Clinic. The clinic, formed by a staff containing a doctor, dentist, secretary, and driver, worked in the districts of Serra Pelada, in Afonso Cláudio, and São Luís de Miranda, in Laranja da Terra. In one year of work, 15 villages were involved in a total of 23,800 medical appointments. However, missionary work continued, and in São Luís de Miranda, evangelistic meetings were carried out, which led to the formation of a Bible class with 150 people.⁷²

Adventist education also had accomplishments in that decade. In 1977 the Campo Grande Adventist Academy, in Cariacica, started to offer the fifth grade of elementary school.⁷³ In the same year, the IBES Adventist Academy, in Vila Velha, underwent structural reforms, since, according to Professor Corino Pires, education director of the East Conference, until then the school had its first four grades functioning “very precariously.”⁷⁴ And in December 1977, the Mobile Clinic, established in Serra Pelada, served about three hundred people in Afonso Cláudio, with social and evangelistic assistance and health prevention.⁷⁵

Likewise, public evangelism was not left behind. In early 1978 the East Conference registered one of the biggest records in all of Brazil: 2,000 people baptized throughout 1977.⁷⁶ And meanwhile, the Adventist message reached other places in the south of Espírito Santo, including the cities of Jerônimo Monteiro, Vila Itapemirim, and Marataizes. Shortly after Easter 1978, Pastor Valdemiro Berger, who served the Cachoeiro do Itapemirim district, conducted an outdoor Bible study class, with about forty interested people.⁷⁷ In December 1979, due to evangelistic efforts, the East Conference included 67 organized churches and 18,217 Adventists.⁷⁸

At the beginning of the 1980s, the East Brazil Union Mission (presently Southeast Brazil Union Conference) had 279 organized churches and 84,387 members, requiring a reorganization.⁷⁹ Thus, during its eleventh Quadrennial Assembly, from January 2 to 5, 1980, it was voted the geographical reorganization of EBUC (East Brazil Union Mission) in four mission fields: Rio de Janeiro Conference, covering the entire state of Rio de Janeiro; Northeast Brazil Mission, covering the states of Alagoas, Bahia, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte, and Sergipe; Minas Gerais Mission, managing the entire state of Minas Gerais; and the East Conference, covering the entire state of Espírito Santo.⁸⁰ In the same year the East Conference was renamed Espírito Santo Conference.⁸¹

The early years of the 1980s were also marked by the expansion of the church in Espírito Santo. In 1983, after a series of extensions and renovations, Guarapari CATRES already had a structure of 205 bunk beds, seven colonial-style chalets, two luxury apartments, three houses, a 35-seat dormitory, a chapel, cafeteria, and kitchen.⁸² A new air-conditioned cafeteria with capacity for 300 people and a new kitchen have recently been made.⁸³ In addition, IBES Adventist academies in Vila Velha, and Campo Grande in Cariacica, which offered up to the present elementary and middle school, received structural reforms such as the construction of rooms for administration and improvement of living facilities for students.⁸⁴ At this time the IBES Adventist Academy was considered one of the largest in the conference, as it had 700 students in 1984.⁸⁵

With the breakthrough in missionary service and the growth of members and those interested in Adventism, the Espírito Santo Conference adopted the slogan “The Holy Spirit Is in a Hurry,” with the aim of expanding the Adventist message to cities in the south of the state. In 1985 the city of Apicá had an Adventist chapel built,⁸⁶ and in December of that same year, the church of Santa Tereza was already completed and organized.⁸⁷ New churches were inaugurated in this decade such as Santa Rita, in Vila Velha, in December 1986,⁸⁸ and Domingos Martins, Iúna, Castelo, and Rio Novo, in 1988.⁸⁹ Until the end of 1987, Espírito Santo Conference managed to baptize 2,000 people,⁹⁰ and in 1988, through a field project, a new church was built in the village of Santa Maria de Jetibá.⁹¹ At the end of the 1980s, Espírito Santo had 19,114 Adventist members and 75 organized churches.⁹²

In late 1989 the Adventist Church in Espírito Santo started to manage Rádio Cidade (City Radio), in Afonso Cláudio. The radio broadcasts, inaugurated in 1989, started at 4:00 a.m. and went on until 10: p.m. Some programs such as “Voice of Prophecy,” “Life and Health,” and “Our Little Friend” were broadcasted by the station, which initially worked on the modulated amplitude system (AM).⁹³ Afonso Cláudio Adventist Radio is considered the first broadcaster of the present New Time Radio.⁹⁴

In 1993 the Adventist message reached other cities in Espírito Santo, which was considered a target of the Adventist Church's Global Mission in the state. In October 1993, the Adventist presence arrived in Santa Leopoldina, where an Adventist congregation was inaugurated, and in Alfredo Chaves, where a Bible instructor had already been meeting with a small group of Adventists. Through the work in the two cities, the whole state of Espírito Santo was infiltrated by the Adventist message.⁹⁵ In 1995 missionary work resulted in the baptism of 2,338 people across the state.⁹⁶ Then, in January 2000, it already had 220 organized churches and 28,894 Adventist members.⁹⁷

Conference Organizational History

Missionary expansion in the state of Espírito Santo continued. At the beginning of 2005, the Adventist Church had 266 organized churches and 35,715 members,⁹⁸ which required an administrative reorganization and the division of the mission field administered by the Espírito Santo Conference (AES). Thus, in December 2005, the East Brazil Union Mission gathered at the Vitória Central Adventist Church on February 12, 2006, in order to study a project for the creation of a new mission field in Espírito Santo.⁹⁹

In view of the preliminary study presented at the assembly, the East Union noted that there were conditions to form a new field in Espírito Santo, and asked the South American Division (SAD) to appoint a survey on the feasibility of reorganizing the territory. The board was appointed in May 2006, with three directors from SAD, three from the East Union, three from AES, plus two district pastors and two lay members.¹⁰⁰

After two years of study, in May 2008, the South American Division accepted the Survey Board report that gave its opinion on the feasibility of the new field and for that purpose approved the division of the territory into two institutions. One would continue to be called Espírito Santo Conference while the new field, called South Espírito Santo Conference (ASES), would start operating on January 1, 2009, headquartered in Cariacica.¹⁰¹ The headquarter's cornerstone was laid on July 12, 2008.¹⁰² In November of that year (2008), Espírito Santo Conference convened the I ASES Ordinary Assembly,¹⁰³ which elected Pastor Moisés Dias de Carvalho Júnior as president, Joel Fernandes de Carvalho Filho as secretary, and Hermes Demarche as treasurer.¹⁰⁴

The new field started its activities with 19,223 members, 78 groups, and 162 organized churches, a total of 240 congregations. Its initial mission, which continues today, is to make disciples of all nations, inviting them to accept Jesus as their personal Savior and to join the remnant church, instructing them to serve Him as Lord and preparing them for His brief return. The first headquarters of ASES operated in a rented building, on 36 Pio XII Street, Campo Grande neighborhood, in Cariacica.¹⁰⁵ In 2010 it moved to its current address, on 155 Jaime Pacheco Machado Street, in the same neighborhood.¹⁰⁶ When ASES was established, it started to manage the IBES Adventist Educational Center, in Vila Velha; the Campo Grande Adventist Academy, in Cariacica; and Afonso Cláudio New Time Radio.¹⁰⁷

Since its creation ASES has experienced steady growth in the number of members and congregations. From 19,223 Adventists in 2009, the field members amount rose to 28,534 in late 2018. The number of groups rose from 78 to 106, and from 162 organized churches to 210. The growth of the field is mainly due to annual public evangelism, which receives the help of students from the theology department of the Latin American Adventist Theology Seminary (SALT). Annually, about forty-five students from different SALT offices conduct evangelism programs in local churches with the help of permanent workers and district pastors.

Similarly to the work of evangelism, ASES is still a pioneer in the Ministry of Prisons. Five prisons in the region were inaugurated for the preaching of the Adventist message to the inmates. In 2018 the project, coordinated by Pastor Edigar Alvarenga, led to the baptism of 700 inmates. In addition to the Ministry of Prisons, the field also works with churches that use different approaches, such as "Espaço Novo Tempo" (New Time Space), in Praia da Costa, Vila Velha, whose goal is to reach more secular people. As a result many people have given their lives to Christ. One of the social projects held by ASES in late 2018 was the renovation of a children's shelter in Cariacica. The project was carried out in its entirety by the conference headquarter's servers, through the initiative of Pastor Fernando Júnior, leader of the Ação Solidária Adventista (ASA) (Dorcas Society) department. The services performed by the employees at the shelter were external and internal cleaning work, minor structural repairs, painting, and furniture relocation.¹⁰⁸

Another missionary project that is being developed in the field is "One Year in Mission,"¹⁰⁹ an initiative of the South American Division Youth Ministry. In 2018 about sixty people began to study the Bible as a result of the work developed by the project. Since February 2019, 14 young people from the states of Espírito Santo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, and Ceará are participating in the project, located in the churches of Praia da Costa, Central of Vila Velha, Itapuã, Ilha dos Aires, and Espaço Novo Tempo.¹¹⁰ In partnership with the Southeast Brazil Union Conference (USeB), the South Espírito Santo Conference develops another project called: "Alcancemos--Somos um em busca dos 100" (Let's reach--We are one in search of 100). The project, released to commemorate 100 years of USeB, aims to mobilize congregations in the USeB mission field to study the Bible with 100 people.¹¹¹

In the past two years, the field has also stood out in the number of baptisms. In celebration of 10 years of operation of ASES, in 2018, 200 people were baptized at Praia do Morro, in Guarapari, at CATRES facilities. In addition, throughout 2018 about three thousand people were baptized. In the area of social communication, ASES had another achievement: since March 2019 Afonso Cláudio New Time Radio started to operate on the 93.3 FM frequency.¹¹²

In 2019 ASES introduced the "Hope Impact" project¹¹³ in southern Espírito Santo. Two days before the project, a box of Livros da Esperança (Hope Books) was placed on one of the main roads in the Campo Grande neighborhood, in Cariacica. Thus, people passing by could press a button on the device itself, and the box would deliver the book "Esperança Para a Família" (Hope for the Family). Approximately two hundred fifty thousand copies of the book were distributed to the population throughout the South Central Espírito Santo.¹¹⁴

ASES is also active in the humanitarian sector, through Ação Solidária Adventista (Dorcas Society). Due to the heavy rains that affected the state of Espírito Santo in November 2019, members of Campo Grande Adventist Church, in Cariacica, distributed clothing and food to homeless families in Novo Horizonte neighborhood, in Cariacica. Because of the heavy rains, the city even declared a state of emergency. The action of Campo Grande church also integrated the activities of the Mutirão de natal (Christmas Taskforce)¹¹⁵2019.¹¹⁶

One of ASES's biggest projects was during the beginning of Campo Grande Adventist Academy, in Cariacica. The school unit, whose construction took about four years to be completed, has a capacity for 1,200 students. The building also includes 22 classrooms, a library, a toy library, a laboratory, and a multisports court with a total area of 6,000 square meters. In 2019 the school had 950 students enrolled.¹¹⁷

South Espírito Santo Conference understands that the learning obtained from its history is that at all times in the midst of challenges and victories, God has always been present, showing means and methods for the progress of His work. Still, there are challenges to be faced, and the main one has been building a church in every neighborhood in the cities. The big obstacles to overcome are the high investments and the difficulties in evangelizing certain locations. However, even in the face of constant challenges, it is the Adventist Church's plan in the region to baptize 10,000 people over the next four years, encourage the discipleship program in order to have disciples in all churches through Small Groups,¹¹⁸ and have one more Adventist academy in the city of Cachoeiro do Itapemirim, which is already being implemented.

Chronology of Administrative Leaders

Presidents: Moisés Dias de Carvalho Júnior (2009--2019); Itamar Lelis Rodrigues (2019--Present).

Secretaries: Joel Fernandes de Carvalho Filho (2009--2012); Rudiney Coelho Souza (2013--Present).

Treasurers: Hermes Demarche (2009--2014); Jander Campos de Oliveira (2015--2019); Daniel Toledo (2019--Present).¹¹⁹

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