



Manoel Rosa de Oliveira

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Oliveira, Manoel Rosa de (1917–2009)

THE BRAZILIAN WHITE CENTER – UNASP

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Manoel Rosa de Oliveira was born on January 4, 1917, in the city of Santo Antonio da Patrulha, state of Rio Grande do Sul. He was the son of João Oliveira da Rosa and Etelvina Mendes da Rosa,¹ who in 1904 was part of the first baptism in the Campestre region, today belonging to the city of São Leopoldo, state of Rio Grande do Sul.²

Manoel spent his childhood in Campestre and despite his mother's baptism years earlier, he did not grow up in an Adventist home. Etelvina was greatly opposed by her husband and after resisting for some time, eventually stopped attending church. The community in the region was generally poorly educated and their families very patriarchal. His father, of Catholic tradition, was quite combative toward the Adventist Church, to which most of his mother's relatives belonged.³

Manoel first heard of Jesus at the age of nine. He was attending a traditional Portuguese holiday where a musical group called Terno de Reis sang songs about the moment when wise men from the east went looking for Jesus. Manoel asked his mother if this Jesus was real or just another invented character like Snow White. His mother instructed him that Jesus is alive in heaven and will one day come to take His followers to heaven. He also once heard his grandmother say that, in the Bible, God had forbidden the use of blood and pork. This was imprinted on his mind.⁴

He first came in contact with the Bible at age 16. After hearing his cousin talk about the second coming of Jesus, he looked at home for a New Testament that his father had and from that reading his interest in God's Word increased. At 18, he had for the first time the complete Bible in his hands, which had been sold by a canvasser to his brother-in-law.⁵ Shortly thereafter, he attended an Adventist service at his cousin's invitation and decided to keep the Sabbath.⁶

Manoel suffered severe consequences for his decision. At his father's command, in 1938 he left home, barefoot and with only a few clothes, a Bible, and the Sabbath School lesson. In order to study and become a worker for the cause of God, he went to Taquara Adventist Gymnasium (middle school), where he worked for a year so he

could begin his studies the following year. He cut eucalyptus firewood and drove the cart that carried the milk to the school grounds. On November 25, 1939, he was baptized by Pastor John Boehm.⁷

Although not having finished the Gymnasium, in 1943 he accepted the invitation to reopen and teach at an Adventist School at Erval Seco City at the request of Otavio Espirito Santo who had left the board of IACS to take over the Department of Education in the Rio Grande do Sul Conference. He began work in March, visiting families in the region, and got 50 students for Grades 1 through 5 in the primary school. During the week, Manoel taught the children and on weekends did evangelistic work, getting 10 baptisms as a result. However, Manoel's salary was not paid by the conference and depended exclusively on his pupils' parents. As they were very poor, they could not keep up the payment, so after one year of school, he could not continue teaching.⁸

In 1944, Manoel accepted the call to be a teacher in the Retovado region, today the city of São José do Norte, in Rio Grande do Sul State. On February 22, 1944, he married Ida Vargas da Silva, in Cachoeira do Sul.⁹ From that union was born: Rute (1945; died as an infant), Jair, Paulo Jarí, Jaime, Jeane, Isaías, and Marlene.¹⁰ On vacation, she could support her family's budget. His miraculous experiences selling religious literature motivated him to continue preaching the Adventist message.¹¹ He taught until 1948 when he returned to Taquara Gymnasium and finished his studies in 1949. In 1950, he began the theology course at the Brazilian Adventist College (now Central Adventist University of Sao Paulo), graduating in 1953.¹²

From 1954 to 1957 he worked as a licensed minister of the Rio Grande do Sul Conference, based in Porto Alegre.¹³ He was ordained to the pastoral ministry in 1958.¹⁴ From 1959 to 1961, he was director of the Publishing Department of that same Conference.¹⁵ Following this, he served as a pastor in several districts in Rio Grande do Sul: Santo Angelo, from 1963 to 1965; Santo Antônio, from 1966 to 1968; Camaquã, from 1969 to 1973,¹⁶ and Taquara, from 1974 to 1975.¹⁷ After 32 years of ministry, he retired in 1976.^{18,19}

Ida, his first wife, died on September 13, 1989 in Santo Antonio da Patrulha.²⁰ Subsequently, he married Julia Guimarães, to whom he was married for 12 years before she, too, died, leaving Manoel widowed again. On September 1, 2002, he was married a third time, this time to Almira Aguiar. In 2004, he wrote the book *Pioneiros do Sul: Revivendo histórias de amor e fé* (Southern Pioneers Reliving Stories of Love and Faith), in which he talked about the arrival of Adventism in the South of Brazil.²¹

Manoel Rosa lived his last years in the region of Taquara Academy and died in 2009, at the age of 91, in Taquara City, Rio Grande do Sul.²² He made significant contributions to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Brazil, especially in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Of humble origins, he was able to overcome difficulties and do pastoral ministry for 32 years. His example has influenced several of his relatives and other inhabitants of Campestre, Rio Grande do Sul, of which more than 50 became Seventh-day Adventist Church workers.²³

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. Manoel Rosa de Oliveira, *Southern Pioneers: Reliving Stories of Love and Faith* (Taquara, RS: Metta Conference of Brazil, 2004), 15.
2. *Ibid.*, 103.
3. *Ibid.*, 106, 107.
4. *Ibid.*, 103.
5. *Ibid.*, 108.
6. *Ibid.*, 111.
7. *Ibid.*, 115-117.
8. *Ibid.*, 120-121.
9. *Ibid.*, 124.
10. *Ibid.*, 15, 125.
11. *Ibid.*, 128.
12. *Ibid.*, 14, 127.
13. "Rio Grande do Sul Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1955), 147; "Rio Grande do Sul Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), 157.
14. "Rio Grande do Sul Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1959), 163.
15. "Rio Grande do Sul Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1960), 167.

16. "Rio Grande do Sul Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1970), 226, 660; "Rio Grande do Sul Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1973/74), 237, 618.
17. "Rio Grande do Sul Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1975), 242, 637; "Rio Grande do Sul Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), 259, 699.
18. "Rio Grande do Sul Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1964), 203, 520.; and "Rio Grande do Sul Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1965/66), 208, 699.
19. "Rio Grande do Sul Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1967), 211, 642.; "Rio Grande do Sul Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1969), 220, 639.
20. "Ida Vargas de Oliveira," *Revista Adventista*, June 1990, 45.
21. Oliveira, 140.
22. "Manoel Rosa de Oliveira," *Revista Adventista*, May 5, 2009, 37.
23. Oliveira, 140.

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