



Digital Projection of West Minas Mission headquarters.

Photo courtesy of West Minas Mission Archives.

## West Minas Mission

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West Minas Mission (MMO) is an administrative unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church located in the territory of the Southeast Brazil Union Conference (USEB). Its headquarters is at 81 Rua Manoel Camargo da Cruz, Saint Monica district, ZIP code 38.408-084, in the city of Uberlandia, state of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

The missionary area of West Minas Mission comprises the Center and Western regions of Minas Gerais, which includes the Alto Paranaíba and Minas Triangle microregions, covering a total of 141 towns. These towns are, from the easternmost Divinópolis to the westernmost Santa Vitória, and from the northwestern Unaí to the southwestern São Sebastião do Paraíso, covering municipalities such as: Araguari, Bom Despacho, Carmo do Parnaíba, Formiga, Frutal, Ituiutaba, Iturama, Luz, São Gotardo, Patos de Minas, Patrocínio, Passos, Prata,

Uberaba, Uberlandia.

The West Minas Mission territory has two Adventist Education units serving 878 students. These are Uberaba Adventist Academy, located at Maria Carmelita Castro Cunha Av., 130, Vila Olímpica, in Uberaba, with 188 enrolled students; and Adventist Educational Center of Uberlandia, located at 739 Jorge Martins Pinto St., in Saint Monica district of Uberlandia, with 690 students.

There are also 17 Hope Channel open channels in the region in the following cities: Araxá (channel 50), Abaeté (36), Carmo do Parnaíba (46), Divinópolis (45), Formiga (36), Itaúna (21), Ituiutaba (21), Juatuba (18), Lagoa Formosa (49), Mateus Leme (18), Nova Serrana (23), Presidente Olegário (14), Paranaíba River (16), São Gotardo (9), Tiros (19), and Uberlandia (14). About 1.6 million people are reached in the region through the evangelistic work of Hope Channel.

The territory covered by the West Minas Mission has a total population of 3,980,153, where there are 12,248 Adventists spread in 22 pastoral districts, 62 organized churches, and 87 groups. The regional average is of 1 Adventist per 324 inhabitants. To serve this population, the mission has 6 employees working in the office, 21 accredited workers, and 9 licensed ones, plus 18 accredited ministers and 8 licensed ministers, a total of 62 servers.

## The Origin of the Adventist Work in the Mission's Territory

The Adventist message got to the state of Minas Gerais in the 1890s, when two canvassers arrived in the small town of Mucuri in 1896. The effort of the pair was rewarded and, in one of the first baptisms recorded in the state and in Brazil, 19 people were baptized by F. W. Spies.<sup>1</sup> However, even greater efforts to evangelize the state of Minas Gerais would only begin in December 1910, with the creation of Brazil Union Conference and the destination of weekly offers from that institution to maintain a worker in that state only in 1911<sup>2</sup>

Between 1910 to 1911, the canvassers Germano Conrad and Emílio Froemming were sent from Rio Grande do Sul to work in Minas Gerais.<sup>3</sup> The work of the pair, however, caught the attention of the Catholic Church authorities. In one of the widely circulated newspapers in the state, as early as 1911, a warning came out telling Catholics to be careful, as there was a "salesperson selling heretical books" around the Leopoldina Railroad. The warning, most likely written by a Catholic authority, went even further to mention that the books were "beautiful in appearance and very showy, with several pictures."<sup>4</sup>

Who also suffered doing the work of canvassing in Minas Gerais was the young canvasser Gustavo Storch. In the holidays of 1916/1917, Storch was sent canvassing to Belo Horizonte, capital of Minas Gerais, and after selling one to a certain man, he ended up being practically thrown out of the capital, as this man had even bought a gun to kill him. Cast out of Belo Horizonte and trying to sell in the farms, the canvasser saw, from the top of a hill, a small house, and went there to try to sell something. The owner of the house then asked him where the

other man who accompanied him was, and Storch understood that it was an angel who was accompanying him. As a result, that man bought all his books, even though he could not read.<sup>5</sup>

In 1916 Minas Mission was organized from part of the North Brazil Union Mission's territory. In December 1917, missionary J. E. Brown and his wife were sent from São Paulo to work in Minas Gerais, settling in Juiz de Fora. Once in town Brown rented a hall to hold a series of conferences there.<sup>6</sup> As early as 1919, Minas Mission was divided between the East Minas and West Minas missions, all linked to the North Brazil Union Mission.<sup>7</sup>

Shortly after, in 1924, new records of Adventists appear in the western region of Minas Gerais, in cities such as Muzambinho and Guaranésia. In Guaranésia, for example, there was already an organized group visited by worker C. L. Bainer on May 31, 1924, and in the city of Muzambinho, another organized group.<sup>8</sup> There are also records of conferences held in 1924, in Varginha, in the southwest region. As a result of these conferences led by Domingos Peixoto da Silva and Germano Conrad, nine people were baptized on May 30, 1925, by Pastor N. P. Neilsen.<sup>9</sup>

In 1929 Minas Gerais missions were already under the administration of the East Brazil Union Conference, and at a meeting of the administrative board of that union on December 5, 1928, it was reported that the state already had more than two hundred Adventist members.<sup>10</sup> It was also in 1928 that the two missions became one again: Minas Mission, based in Juiz de Fora. In December 1928, the state had four organized churches and 212 members,<sup>11</sup> but by 1929 to 1930 Minas Gerais already had five organized churches and 242 members.

In January 1931, the South American Division's steering committee began to study the merger of the missionary territories of the states of Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro into one mission.<sup>12</sup> At the time, each of the two states had five churches, and while Rio de Janeiro had 635 Adventists, Minas Gerais had 308 members.<sup>13</sup> Thus, from June 1931, the Rio-Minas Mission was organized, comprising the two states, based in the city of Rio de Janeiro, with Pastor E. M. Davis as superintendent, and Edwin Langenstrassen as treasurer secretary.<sup>14</sup> In December 1931, the new field had nine organized churches and 824 members.

From the 1930s the message began to reach other places in Minas Gerais. In Belo Horizonte, for example, although there were already Adventists, such as Sister Maria Kroeker and her family, the first steps toward evangelism in the capital began to be taken, in 1930, when Pastor José R. dos Passos directed evangelistic meetings, baptizing eight people.<sup>15</sup> In April 1933, under the leadership of Daniel Feder, 13 people were baptized by E. M. Davis after a series of conferences in Santa Tereza district.<sup>16</sup>

In 1935 Rio-Minas Mission had 10 organized churches and 1,062 Adventists,<sup>17</sup> and this year Adventist work begins to expand to the west of Minas Gerais territory. In 1936 the worker A. E. Hagen and his wife moved to Uberlândia in order to attend the work in the state of Goiás. However, Hagen had already made plans to start a series of conferences in the city in October, 1936, as he and his wife and a man identified only as Haroldo were the only Adventists in the city. In his article in the *Adventist Review*, Hagen reports that there were already seven visitors in the Sabbath School held in his house.<sup>18</sup>

The year 1936 was also marked by administrative changes. The same Gustavo Storch who, as a student, was persecuted during canvassing work in Minas Gerais, now a pastor, was elected superintendent of the Rio-Minas Mission. Another missionary, Pastor Walton Brown and his wife, came from the United States to Rio-Minas Gerais, where Brown took over the direction of the Education and Volunteer Missionaries (MV) departments.

Over the following three years, the progress of the Adventist work in both states was so great that, in October 1939, Gustavo Storch, in an article in the *Adventist Review*, indicated that Minas Gerais could once again become a single mission field, while the State of Rio de Janeiro and the Federal District could be another administrative field. Storch's reason for dividing the field into two would be the high number of Adventists; that is, more than a thousand members in October 1939, plus the size of the field and the "high number of its inhabitants."<sup>19</sup> The fact is that by the end of 1939 the mission reported the existence of 12 organized churches in both states and 1,280 Adventists.<sup>20</sup>

The expansion continued and in 1941, the Adventist message came more strongly to Minas Triangle region, then administered by Goiás-Minas Mission.<sup>21</sup> This time the missionaries were canvassers Valdivino Bueno and Alvino Lessa, who began the work in Cruzeiro dos Peixotos district in the region of Uberlandia. In the city of Uberlandia, the pair only found one interested person, who did not remain firm in the faith. But even so, the duo sold there the latest edition of the book "O Raiar de Um Novo Dia" (The Dawn of a New Day).<sup>22</sup>

Later that canvassing work would begin to bear fruit. In 1944, while some Adventists were ingathering in the city of Uberlandia, a man came to them asking for baptism, saying that he had come to know the Adventist message because of Valdivino Bueno.<sup>23</sup> In December of the same year, Bueno and another colleague, Lapin T. Nunes, arrived in the city of Uberaba, neighboring to Uberlandia, and there they did the canvassing work selling the books "Guia Prático" (Practical Guide) and "Conselheiro Médico" (Medical Counselor). After six weeks the two managed to collect 27,000 cruzeiros (currently, US\$ 2.37).<sup>24</sup>

In Araguari, the efforts of Miguel Malty and his wife resulted in the construction of a temple in the city on April 28, 1945, which was started by Pastor Manoel Margarido,<sup>25</sup> and where brother Malty himself began directing a conference series. In the same year, in December 1945, Valdivino Bueno and Lapin Nunes met an Adventist woman named Noemia Leal who lived in Uberlandia and started Sabbath School with her. It was also from 1945 that the program Voice of Prophecy began to be retransmitted by Rádio Difusora Brasileira (Broadcaster Brazil Radio) of Uberlandia, now Radio Itatiaia.<sup>26</sup>

Gradually, the number of people interested in the Adventist message grew, and in 1947 Pastor Oscar dos Reis was transferred to Uberlandia. After a series of conferences led by Reis and A. Rutz, the first baptism in Uberlandia took place on February 28, 1948.<sup>27</sup> By April 1948 there were already more than one hundred sixty Adventists in the region, both in the city of Uberlandia and in the small villages of Cruzeiro dos Peixotos, Canapolis, Ituiutaba, and Toribaté, currently Monte Alegre de Minas.<sup>28</sup> Already in September of the same year, Reis baptized eight more people in Cruzeiro dos Peixotos, and in November 1949, seven more people,

increasing the group of Adventists in the region of Minas Triangle.<sup>29</sup> Thanks to the efforts employed in the region, Goiás-Minas Mission, which also encompassed Minas Triangle, started the 1950s with two organized churches and a total of 436 Adventists.<sup>30</sup>

Between 1951 and 1952, with conferences conducted by Oscar dos Reis in Araguari,<sup>31</sup> the existing group in the city began to be invigorated. Uberlandia, which also had a small group of Adventists meeting in a church on Rua TenenteVirmondes, was not far behind either: between 1954 and 1955, the city hosted a new series of conferences led by Pastor Geraldo de Oliveira, and as a result, 110 people were baptized.<sup>32</sup>

During the visit of Pastor Moysés Nigri, then president of the South Brazil Union Conference, on the territory of Goiás-Minas Mission in the first quarter of 1955, the progress reports of the work in the Triângulo Mineiro were optimistic. Araguari, for example, had a pulsating group and a primary school, and Canápolis already had 110 members enrolled in the Sabbath School, in addition to 30 students enrolled in the primary school that operated in that church.<sup>33</sup> As a result of all the work in Uberlandia region in December 1955, there were 740 Adventists in Goiás-Minas Mission, as well as an organized primary school in Uberlandia with 30 students enrolled under the direction of Rubens Lessa.<sup>34</sup>

With the growth of the Adventist group in Uberlandia, the hall in which it met became small and thus a larger venue was needed. Therefore, on September 16, 1956, the cornerstone of Uberlandia Adventist Church was laid,<sup>35</sup> and five years later, on September 16, 1961, the new church was opened with 130 members, with the presence of Pastor Moysés Nigri and Valdivino Bueno, the same one who had started the work in the 1940s, as district pastor of the emerging church.<sup>36</sup> Thus, together with Canapolis, Uberlandia had one of the five churches organized in Goiás-Minas Mission in December 1962, and its members were among the 2,138 in the mission that year.<sup>37</sup>

With the inauguration of Brasília, the new capital of Brazil, in 1961, the territory of the Federal District was also administered by Goiás-Minas Mission. In this context of geopolitical expansion, the church also grew in the territory. Hence, in 1964 Goiás and Minas Triangle became part of the Central Brazil Mission, in a reconfiguration of the Goiás-Minas Mission. The new mission started in January 1965 with eight organized churches and 3,038 Adventist members.<sup>38</sup>

However, about two years later a new change would affect the Triangle region more directly. Until 1967 part of the region was managed by Minas Mission, and another part, which was comprised of Uberlandia, Uberaba, and adjacent towns, was administered by Goiás-Minas Mission, later Central Brazil Mission. In the search for an administrative restructure that would further promote the growth of churches in the region, the South American Division and the South Brazil Union Conference voted to completely separate Minas Triangle from Central Brazil Mission, coming under the administration of Minas Mission and the East Brazil Union Conference from January 1, 1968.<sup>39</sup>

In June 1968 the region had 500 Adventists, two organized churches in Uberlandia and Canapolis, and seven other groups in the cities of Araguari, Centralina, Santa Vitória, Frutal, Ituiutaba, Monte Alegre (formerly Toribaté), and Uberaba.<sup>40</sup> Also in 1968 Minas Mission established a "branch" office in Uberlandia in order to serve more efficiently the canvassers operating in the region.<sup>41</sup> Thus, with the expansion of the Adventist work in the territory, Minas Mission began the year 1970 with the positive balance of 17 churches and 4,956 members throughout the state of Minas Gerais, including Minas Triangle region.<sup>42</sup>

In the late 1960s, the first programs for Adventist Youth in the region began, with social events led by the local fellowship itself. One of the first events was a camp meeting held between February 14 and 16, 1969, under the direction of Eugênio Rodrigues.<sup>43</sup> Still in 1969, the Volunteer Missionaries of Araguari and Uberlandia held a great event to encourage young people for the service of the gospel.<sup>44</sup> And over Christmas 1969, Uberlandia church's Dorcas Society raised nearly two thousand *cruzeiros novos* (currently US \$ 0.42) on groceries, clothing, shoes, and toys for the city's needy children and families.<sup>45</sup>

The 1970s began "in progress" in the region. In early 1973 Pastors Mauro Lobo and Wandyr Mendes started a new series of conferences in the city, which had over three hundred people attending Bible classes, resulting in the baptism of 35 people.<sup>46</sup> In 1973, to assist Pastor Wandyr Mendes in evangelistic work, a group of members from the SDA Central Uberlandia Church formed the Advent Team. The team had a van that it used to go out preaching and encouraging the other church members in missionary work.<sup>47</sup>

The following year, 1974, the church held the *Congresso Primavera* (Spring Congress) in Uberlandia, aimed at the young Adventists of the Minas Triangle. About a thousand young people attended the event, which brought together Adventists from Monte Alegre, Canapolis, Ituiutaba, Uberaba, Araguari, Uberlandia, and Cruzeiro dos Peixotos.<sup>48</sup>

Another landmark year for the church in the region was 1976. It was the first time the young Adventists were part of a civic parade in Uberlandia on September 7 to celebrate Brazil's Independence Day.<sup>49</sup> The following year, 1977, the city gained two new churches in the districts of Santa Monica and President Roosevelt.<sup>50</sup> In 1978 the Uberlandia Central Adventist Church started to host the *Escola de Recuperação de Alcóolatas e Fumantes* (Alcohol and Smokers Recovery School), a project to help people who were addicted quit the use of alcohol and tobacco. The project's creator was the Adventist physician Ajax Walter Silveira, dedicated to the recovery of addicts in smoking and alcoholism.<sup>51</sup>

Also in October 1978, Pastor Alcy de Almeida found an abandoned building located in the downtown area of Uberlandia and began restoration work on the site. From March 10, 1979, and onwards, the completely renovated building housed Uberlandia Adventist Educational Center,<sup>52</sup> which at that time had kindergarten, pre-primary, and elementary school.<sup>53</sup> The entire evangelistic and social outreach promoted in the region helped Minas Mission to start the decade in January 1980 with 37 organized churches, not including groups, and 12,639 Adventists.<sup>54</sup>

In 1982 a new administrative change would affect Minas Gerais region. With the growth of Adventist work in the region from January 1, 1983, the Minas Mission was divided into two new fields: the Central Minas Mission, with 17,235 Adventists spread in 280 churches and groups, and based in Belo Horizonte; and Juiz de Fora-based South Minas Mission, with 7,750 Adventists divided into about one hundred thirty congregations, including churches and groups.<sup>55</sup> Minas Triangle region was under the administrative guidance of the Central Minas Mission.

In 1986 Adventists from Uberlandia once again gained prominence in society, and this time because of canvassing campaigns. That year 100 students and canvassers were able to pay their tuition thanks to the mass dissemination of their materials, such as the books “O Drama do Tabagismo” (The Drama of Smoking), “Ilusão das Drogas” (Drugs Illusion), and “Steps to Christ” in the local press. In all, more than one million cruzados (currently, U\$ 0.08) were raised in sales, and the Adventist Church in the region was praised for its unreserved work and support in anti-drug campaigns.<sup>56</sup> Canvassing, indirectly, did not yield financial results only. In December 1987 the Central Minas Mission had 21,429 Adventists and 59 organized churches, apart from groups.<sup>57</sup> In January 1990 the field already had a large growth, with 78 organized churches and 25,796 Adventists.<sup>58</sup>

As a result of this expansion, in February 1991 the Central Minas Mission underwent a new administrative overhaul, having changed its status from Mission to Central Minas Conference. The decision was made at the field's extraordinary general assembly, which took place from February 20 to 23, 1991, and, at the time, statistical reports showed that the new conference began to function with 26,709 Adventists, 37 pastoral districts, and 37 churches and groups.<sup>59</sup>

The following year, 1992, the church in the Minas Triangle region gained a revamped Adventist school: the Uberlandia Adventist Educational Center, affectionately known as CEAU, was opened at its own headquarters on December 22, 1991.<sup>60</sup> Thus, canvassing, education and persistent evangelistic fronts with the congregations gave impetus for the continued expansion of Adventist work in the region.

From 1996 new and concentrated efforts were employed to cover the state of Minas Gerais, and one of the target cities was precisely Uberaba, in the Minas Triangle, which received an intense evangelistic campaign from August to November of that year.<sup>61</sup> The missionary crusade paid off: 1996 ended with 127 organized churches and 35,920 Adventists.<sup>62</sup> Due to the constant number of evangelistic series, in January 2000 the Adventist Church in the state of Minas Gerais had 150 organized churches and 38,899 members.<sup>63</sup>

In the early 2000s, the territory of Minas Gerais underwent a new reorganization, with the creation of the East Minas Conference, headquartered in the city of Governador Valadares (MG). The new field, which started operating in January 2001, was made up of territories split from the Central Minas Conference and the South Minas Conference, being then responsible for 16 pastoral districts, a branch of New Time Radio, 62 organized churches, 87 groups, and over thirteen thousand members.<sup>64</sup> In December 2002 the Central Minas Mission had

133 organized churches and 31,225 Adventists.<sup>65</sup>

Beginning in 2004, the expansion of the Adventist message in the Central, Western, and Minas Triangle regions was constant. This year Central Minas Conference started December with 148 organized churches and 31,383 members,<sup>66</sup> expanding the Adventist message to places that did not yet have an SDA presence. This was the case of the municipality of Patos de Minas, for example, which in March 2003 had one of the most challenging districts: 17 cities and only three organized churches, not to mention eight more adjacent cities without any Adventist presence.<sup>67</sup> As of 2008 there were 172 organized churches and 34,155 Adventists,<sup>68</sup> and in 2012, four years later, 193 organized churches and 35,581 Adventists.<sup>69</sup>

The growth of the church in the field led in 2013 to its division: from Matrix Conference came out the North Minas Mission, based in Montes Claros. At the time of its inception, the North Minas Mission had 60 organized churches and 11,648 Adventists,<sup>70</sup> and the Central Minas Conference was left to care for 141 churches and 25,395 Adventists. The division of the field, however, did not prevent the church from thriving in this region: in December 2016 the Central Minas Conference had 159 organized churches and 29,392 Adventists.<sup>71</sup>

## Mission's Organizational History

In June 2017, Matrix Conference missionary territory had a population of 30,842 Adventists and 165 organized churches, compared to a total population of about nine million people,<sup>72</sup> what signaled the need for a new administrative reorganization. To this end, in December 2018, the Central Minas Conference's steering board sent a request to the Southeast Brazil Union Conference, requesting a study and definition of Matrix Conference administrative division.<sup>73</sup> The union then forwarded the survey's request directly to the South American Division.<sup>74</sup>

In March 2019 the South American Division (SAD) approved, in a board meeting, the constitution of a commission (survey) to evaluate the possibility of Matrix Conference territory reorganization and the creation of a new field. The commission was formed by the three directors of the South American Division (Erton C. Köhler, Edward Heidinger, Marlon S. Lopes), three from Southeast Brazil Union Conference (Mauricio Lima, Leonidas Guedes, Jabson Magalhães), three from Matrix Conference (José Marcos N. de Oliveira, Cláudio Antônio H. Lima, Silvanio Zahn), two district pastors (Almir P. de Souza--Distrito de Santa Inês; and Carlos M. de Castro--Patos de Minas District), and two church members (Alexandre F. de Almeida--Progresso Church; and Ataídes T. França--SDA Central Uberlandia Church).<sup>75</sup>

Two months later, in May 2019, the studies were completed and the survey results were submitted to the South American Division Plenary Steering Committee, which, after evaluation, approved the Survey Committee report authorizing the dismemberment of part of Central Minas territory and creation of the West Minas Mission, based in Uberlandia.<sup>76</sup> Also in May 2019, the Southeast Brazil Union Conference appointed Pastor Claudiney Santos and accountant Edson Erthal as president and treasurer of the new field, respectively.<sup>77</sup> The activities of



the new administrative headquarters officially began on December 1, 2019, with the mission to motivate, inspire, and prepare children, youth, young adults, seniors, leaders, and pastors, as the mission is to all.<sup>78</sup>

Note that the fulfillment of the evangelic mission was the driving force for the repeated efforts that culminated in the creation of the new mission field in the challenging central region of Brazil where Western Minas Gerais is located. Leaders and members shared the same purpose and worked together in this direction through various initiatives. One of them took place between 2008 and 2012, under the leadership of local pastors, among them Carlos M. de Castro, Cleverton R. Fortes, Eliseu C. Lira, when the CRESCER (Spiritual Revival Board and Evangelistic Growth Support of the Minas Triangle Region) project was established. With the adhesion of the leaders of the local congregations, among them Ataídes T. França, Cléber Reis, Claudio A. Meireles, Carlos F. Teixeira, Vilmerio J. Pereira, José C. Barcelos, Joaquim Goulart, several and persistent integrated missionary initiatives were carried out in order to promote missionary advancement in and around Uberlandia. Those involved saw in this endeavor a path for the growth of the Adventist message in the region and the establishment of the long-awaited mission to further this goal.

More recently, other initiatives have been decisive. Thinking of the words of Pastor Erton Köhler, president of the South American Division, that “our proposals need to be simple, bold, and relevant,” the many intentional actions of Southeast Brazil Union Conference management under the leadership of Pr. Maurício Lima and the Matrix Conference, under the leadership of Pr. José Marcos N. Oliveira, were decisive for the creation of a new mission field. Applying this leadership vision, it was possible to make the territorial division of Matrix Conference viable within just six years (2013 to 2019),<sup>79</sup> in a context in which the average time required for the management of a new administrative field is fifteen years. The reasons for the creation of the new field were its demographic, geographical, and economic potential, as well as shortening distances to better serve the region. It should be noted that the region is financially viable and has a strong membership number, and the creation of the mission is intended to hasten the growth of the Adventist Church in Western Minas Gerais.

By the Matrix Conference (AMC), ten actions were put in place to make the new field a reality. They are: elaboration of a strategic plan to hasten the growth of the church in the regions of Minas Triangle and Alto Paranaíba; transfers of pastors with an evangelistic profile to the region; opening new districts with growth potential; planting of the Uberlandia Evangelistic Center (CEU), with the appointment of an exclusive evangelist for the Minas Triangle; constant presence of administrators and department leaders in the region; funding of the Adventist Education Network in the region, with heavy investments in reforms and the opening of a new school (in Uberaba); maintenance of hired Bible workers in cities with small Adventist presence and in mission municipalities; unification of the Central and West Minas regions in the project of the new mission, with direct work performed with local church leaders; financial adjustments to Matrix Conference's spending to enable investment in the proposed goals; and, above all, confidence that God is ahead of His work, and through His blessings the project would advance successfully.<sup>80</sup>

However, the successful installation of the new field brings new demands and opportunities. Even in its early days, West Minas Mission leaders already recognize the challenges ahead for advancing Adventist work in the territory. The biggest one is to more effectively establish the Adventist presence in the largest cities and to advance church planting in the unreached cities. Of the 141 towns covered by the West Minas Mission, 68 have no presence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There are some large cities that, although they have an established Adventist presence, still have a very large ratio of non-Adventists to Adventists.

In this context the plan is to work hard on the personal involvement of all members in the mission of preaching the gospel, according to their gifts. In addition, systematic church planting is also planned in neighborhoods of the largest cities in the region and in cities without an Adventist presence. There are also plans to use the missionary potential provided by Hope Channel, especially in cities that have the channel's open TV signal. These combined actions are intended to enhance the growth of church membership and the opening of new churches throughout the field. This plan is important for the mission to achieve financial sustainability and conference status in a short time.

As for the educational aspect, the plans are to expand existing structures and, consequently, increase the number of students in these educational units. It is also planned to open new teaching units, both in Uberlandia and in other medium-sized cities in the West Minas Mission territory. It is noteworthy that the mission already has 7.000 square meters of land in Uberlandia, on which will be built the permanent headquarters of the field and, in the future, a new unit of Adventist Education will also be built. Attention will also be given to the structuring and expansion of the Ministry of Publication, strengthening the work of the current active canvassers and recruiting new canvassers so that the field can be widely served.

Finally, it is observed that in its journey the Adventist Church in West Minas Mission territory has had a remarkable growth experience. This advance signaled the great missionary involvement of Adventists in the region, who from the beginning witnessed to be aware of their personal responsibilities as God's servants and preachers of the Word. And even today the flame of the gospel motivates them. Leaders and members are willing to achieve even greater goals for the cause of God through unity and coordinated work in response to God's great evangelic commission for this challenging region. The dream of hosting a mission has been achieved, and from now on, Adventist missionaries from the Midwest of Minas Gerais continue to pursue new achievements that will make it possible to raise the banner of the eternal gospel even higher in this blessed region still considered by the SDAs as a challenging territory to be widely evangelized.

## Chronology of Administrative Executives

Presidents: Claudiney Santos (2019-current).

Secretaries: Alexandre Rodrigues Carneiro (2019-current).

Treasurer: Edson Erthal (2019-current).

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