

Tabuenca, José (1917–1999)

DANIEL OSCAR PLENC

Daniel Oscar Plenc, Th.D. (River Plate Adventist University, Entre Ríos, Argentina), currently works as a theology professor and director of the White Research Center at the River Plate Adventist University. He worked as a district pastor for twelve years. He is married to Lissie Ziegler and has three children.

José Tabuenca was a pastor and ecclesiastic administrator in the former Austral Union Conference of the South American Division and in institutions such as Uruguay Academy, River Plate Academy, and South America Spanish Publishing House.¹

José Tabuenca was born in Armstrong, Santa Fe, Argentina, on October 24, 1917, at Marcelina Gracia Arcega and Andrés Tabuenca's house. Juan Gracia, Marcelina's father, was introduced to Adventism in a village of Aragon, Spain, in 1906, through the canvasser Pedro Sanza and Pastor Walter Bond from the United States. José's father, Andrés Tabuenca, traveled to Argentina with his brother Pedro Tabuenca (1893–1960) to settle, and later his family joined him. Andrés and Marcelina Tabuenca moved to Armstrong and then in 1922 moved to Costa Grande, near Puiggari (currently Libertador San Martín), Entre Ríos, Argentine Republic, to educate his children at River Plate Academy. Andrés and his family dedicated to poultry and agriculture to be able to educate their children at the academy. Soon he was invited by the principal of River Plate Academy, Jess S. Marshall (1888–1960), to work on the farm and take care of the birds at the academy, and he did so for the following 37 years² as the school grew and became known as River Plate Junior College, and then River Plate College.

The time that José spent at River Plate Junior College did not pass in vain, but rather, he was treasuring the teachings and life lessons of his Christian teachers such as Susana Block of Beskow, Irving Mohr, and Edgar Brooks. Other professors transmitted his vocation of service, among them John D. Livingstone, Esther Peverini de Alberro, Braulio Pérez Marcio, and Nicolás Chaij. José was baptized on November 11, 1931, at River Plate Junior College. José's whole family supported the educational project by working tirelessly. While studying, José did administrative tasks at school. In the summers, he sold publications under the direction of the missionaries Pedro Tabuenca, Nicolás Chaij, and Benjamín Riffel.

In November 1939, José Tabuenca graduated in the ministerial course (with the diploma of bachelor's in theology) and the commercial course from the River Plate Academy.³ He entered the Adventist organization on November 15, 1939, and was ordained to the pastoral ministry on February 11, 1950. Years later, in December 1965, he completed a four-year bachelor of religion degree at River Plate College. He also studied for a quarter at Takoma Park Adventist Seminary, Washington, D.C., United States, and in a quarter, he joined the Extension Course of Montevideo Seminary, Uruguay. For a year, he studied in the Humanities Faculty of Montevideo, Uruguay.

José married Carmen J. Collado on January 31, 1940. Carmen was born on June 24, 1913, in San Francisco, Córdoba. Her parents were Federico Collado and Herminda Jeannot. She was baptized on October 14, 1933, in Santa Fe, Argentina. Carmen and José Tabuenca had two children: Julio César and Lina Alcira.

Together they accepted the challenge of being missionaries in Peru in the former Inca Union Mission. Tabuenca served first as an accountant and interim treasurer in Lake Titicaca Mission (1940–1942) and then began pastoral work in the Peru Mission (1942–1943). From Peru, they returned to the Austral Union Conference (the countries of Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay). José Tabuenca acted for a brief time as treasurer of publication in the Central Argentine Conference (1943) and soon as ATM of Austral Union Conference (1943–1945). He did pastoral work in the Uruguay Mission (1945–1948) and expanded his administrative responsibilities as chancellor of Uruguay Academy (1949–1954).

Tabuenca then returned to Buenos Aires, Argentina, as director of Public Relations and the Radio department of Austral Union Conference (1955). He was president the of the North Argentine Mission (1956–1958), director of the Religious Liberty department of the Austral Union Conference (1959–1961), president of the Buenos Aires Conference (1961–1962), general director of River Plate College (1962–1970),⁴ president of Cuyo Mission (1970–1971; now West Central Peru Mission), president of Uruguay Mission (1971–1972), and president of Austral Union Conference (1973–1978).

Once again, he became a district pastor in the city of Córdoba, Argentina, before his final return to administrative duties as manager of Buenos Aires Publishing House (1980–1983), the Adventist publisher for the Hispanic countries of the South American Division, with headquarters in Buenos Aires.

He spent his retirement years at Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina. Later, he married for the second time to Clelia Rostán. José Tabuenca died in Libertador San Martín on March 8, 1999.

Pastor José Tabuenca dedicated 44 years to the mission of the church. Much of the success of his ministry was due to his esteemed teachers and the unconditional support of his family. He served as an administrator in many areas of the Adventist work, with an outstanding talent for public relations and positive contact with the authorities.

SOURCES

La voz del colegio [Voice of the academy], 1968.

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Mayr, Werner. "José Tabuenca: De 'pinche' a presidente" [José Tabuenca: From scullion to president]. *Revista Adventista* [Adventist review], September 1994, 29.

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Wensell, Egil H. *El poder de una esperanza que educa y sana* [The power of a hope that educates and heals]. Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos: River Plate Adventist University, 1993.

NOTES

1. Werner Mayr, "José Tabuenca: De 'pinche' a presidente" [José Tabuenca: From scullion to president], *Revista Adventista* [Adventist review], September 1994, 29; Daniel Oscar Plenc, *25 Historias de misioneros* [25 histories of missionaries] (Buenos Aires: South American Spanish Publishing House, 2013), 128–31. Information corroborated with file 1479 of the former Austral Union Conference, Argentine Union archives.
2. Jess S. Marshall was principal of River Plate Academy from 1920 to 1933. Egil H. Wensell, *El poder de una esperanza que educa y sana* [The power of a hope that educates and heals] (Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos: River Plate Adventist University, 1993), 114; *La voz del colegio* [Voice of the academy], 1919, 34. The 1949 issue of *La voz del colegio* was dedicated to Andrés Tabuenca: "En reconocimiento por su fiel servicio de años en esta casa, dedicamos este número de 'La Voz del Colegio' al consejero Cristiano, padre agnecado, trabajador incansable." (In recognition of his faithful service of years in this house, we dedicate this number of "La Voz del Colegio" to the Christian counselor, self-sacrificing father, tireless worker.) *La voz del colegio* [Voice of the academy], November 1949, 3.
3. See *La voz del colegio* [Voice of the academy], 1939.
4. Egil H. Wensell, *El poder de una esperanza que educa y sana* [The power of a hope that educates and heals] (Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos: River Plate Adventist University, 1993), 114. Under his administration, the second male dormitory was built, the perimeter fence was placed on the school grounds, the new entrance porch was built, and the Conquistadores Club facilities were built. José Tabuenca's vision for the Conquistadores Club for the formation of youth leaders is highlighted.

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