

# Arrais, Francisco de Matos (1926–2017)

## THE BRAZILIAN WHITE CENTER – UNASP

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Francisco de Matos Arrais

Photo courtesy of Brazilian White Center - UNASP.

Francisco de Matos Arrais was a canvasser, lay elder, and church-planting leader in Brazil.

Francisco de Matos Arrais was born on March 16, 1926, in the city of Araripe in the state of Ceará. He was the son of Pedro José da Silva (who passed in 1931) and Maria Lima da Conceição (who died in 1988), and his siblings were: Maria Arrais, Nadir Arrais, Raimundo Rodrigues, Nair Rodrigues, Ivan Rodrigues, and Francisco Rodrigues.<sup>1</sup>

Francisco grew up in the small town of Araripe where agricultural work was the main source of livelihood and the Catholic religion was predominant. Coming from a poor background, he had no opportunity to study,

attending school for only 40 days. When he was still a young man, he received a Bible from Mrs. Ester Assalin, his mother-in-law of his sister-in-law. He became interested in knowing more about God, so he learned how to read through exploring the Bible. From his studies, he began to keep the Sabbath and stopped revering the saints, which was a tradition according to Catholic tradition.<sup>2</sup>

Later, he moved to the state of São Paulo, where on July 31, 1950, at the age of 24, he married Benedita Sionti de Matos (1932-2012) in the city of Dracena. The couple had six children: Admir Josafá Arrais de Matos (1951-1999), Juvenil Antônio Arrais de Matos, Janete Arrais (Guzman), Joel Arrais de Matos, Jonas Edson Arrais de Matos, and Josmar Sionti Arrais de Matos.<sup>3</sup>

After he learned how to read, Francisco continued to study the Bible throughout his life. He was baptized on September 30, 1951, by Pastor Waldemar Rodrigues da Silva in the city of Dracena.<sup>4</sup> His calling as a canvasser began when the Pastor Arthur de Souza Valle from the Dracena district visited him at his home, a farm where he supported them by planting food, mainly rice. Describing his conversion in the *Revista Adventista* magazine, he says that God's working through nature taught him that God is love. Under the trees, he sang hymns and prayed to God asking to be somehow more useful to the preaching of the Gospel. Before the invitation to be a canvasser, he was afraid because he thought he didn't have enough culture or training to do it. Such fear proved incorrect since, from the beginning, Francisco was a great canvasser.<sup>5</sup>

He began his colporteur experience in 1957, and in just one year of work, he was rated as one of the top canvassers in sales of the Sao Paulo Conference. In 1963, he sold 1,000 Bibles besides other denominational books. He was kind and used to write down prayer requests from the families he visited, and he would offer them up to God through prayer every morning.<sup>6</sup> He worked as a canvasser for 54 years, leading hundreds of people to baptism. When he retired, he had 1,500 active clients. His efforts had been concentrated in the territory of the Central Brazil Union Conference. He also contributed to the construction of some churches, especially in Ceara, his home state.<sup>7</sup>

His influence extended to his children. Jonas Arrais dedicated himself to preaching the Adventist message as a pastor. Admir Arrais, who has Ph.D. in Genetics and graduate work in Education through Andrews University, was a professor at UNASP campus Hortolândia, São Paulo, and Engenheiro Coelho. After his first wife's death, Francisco Arrais married to Dirce da Silva Simões on April 12, 2013.<sup>8</sup> He passed away on October 20, 2017, at the age of 91 in the city of Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo.<sup>9</sup>

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## SOURCES

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## NOTES

1. Janete Arrais Guzman to Joao Lucas Moraes Pereira, Brazilian White Center, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, February 23, 2019.
2. Francisco de Mattos Arrais, "Da Roça Para a Colportagem," *Revista Adventista* 53, no. 2 (November 1959): 31; Janete Arrais Guzman to Joao Lucas Moraes Pereira, February 23, 2019.
3. Arrais, "Da Roça Para a Colportagem," *Revista Adventista*, 31; Janete Arrais Guzman to Joao Lucas Moraes Pereira, February 23, 2019.
4. Arrais, "Da Roça Para a Colportagem," *Revista Adventista*, 31; Janete Arrais Guzman to Joao Lucas Moraes Pereira, February 23, 2019.
5. Arrais, "Da Roça Para a Colportagem," 31; "O que Sentem, Pensam e Esperam os Ministros da Página Impressa," *Revista Adventista* 72, no. 9 (September 1977): 20.
6. Janete Arrais Guzman to Joao Lucas Moraes Pereira, (February 23 2019); Araci Almeida, "Boas Novas do Distrito de Dracena," *Revista Adventista* 54, no. 2 (February 1959): 26; Pedro S. Camacho, "Um Grande Exército a Serviço do Senhor," *Revista Adventista* 59, no. 7 (July 1964): 20.
7. Janete Arrais Guzman to Joao Lucas Moraes Pereira, February 23, 2019.
8. Ibid.; "Admir Josafá Arrais de Matos," *Revista Adventista* 95, no. 5 (May 1999): 28; "Ordenação de Novos Pastores," *Revista Adventista* 84, no. 1 (January 1988): 22.
9. Janete Arrais Guzman to Joao Lucas Moraes Pereira, February 23, 2019.

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