

Bernardes, Elzira Mendes (1928–2012)

THE BRAZILIAN WHITE CENTER – UNASP

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Elzira Bernardes

Photo courtesy of Brazilian White Center - UNASP.

Elzira Mendes Bernardes, a volunteer Bible instructor, was born January 1, 1928, in Veadinho do Porto, Riolândia, in the state of São Paulo, Brazil. She was a woman of faith and trust in God, who along with her husband made an important contribution to the preaching of the Adventist message in the north and northeast of Brazil. She married Geraldo Bernardes (1920-2016), on September 13, 1947, in Barretos, São Paulo. Geraldo was directly involved in the founding of several churches, most notably in Peixoto de Azevedo, in the state of Mato Grosso, and Placas, in the state of Pará. Elzira and Geraldo had three children: Maria José, Sergio Renato, and Eloíza (Huaringa).¹ In addition, the couple adopted Moisés Batista de Souza when his parents died. Batista

de Souza currently serves as president of the Pará Amapá Mission.²

Elzira learned of the Adventist message through her husband, who was previously a faithful Catholic, known in his neighborhood for the religion he professed. Geraldo learned of Adventists through Mesário, an Adventist mechanic in the Presidente Vargas region in the interior of the state of São Paulo. Geraldo studied the Bible with Mesário and then shared what he learned with Elzira. She was initially reluctant to learn, but was convinced at last of the biblical truth, and both Elzira and Geraldo were baptized 1956 in the Presidente Vargas district.³

Elzira did not officially work for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, following her baptism she was dedicated to preaching the gospel as a volunteer Bible instructor until she died. She worked in Teresina, in the state of Piauí, and São Luís, in the state of Maranhão.⁴ Her efforts to preach the gospel often resulted in 20 people per year being baptized. Elzira stood out for her pious and compassionate personality, always trying to help the less fortunate. She died at the age of 84, on January 21, 2012, in the city of Planalmira, in the state of Goiás.⁵ She made a significant contribution to the Adventist Church through her deep commitment to preaching the gospel as a lay member.

SOURCES

"Elzira Mendes Bernardes." *Revista Adventista*, year 107, n. 1246, March 2012, 37. Accessed September 20, 2016, <http://acervo.revistaadventista.com.br/>.

"Pr. Moisés Batista – Presidente." Igreja Adventista do Sétimo Dia – Missão Pará Amapá (Online), 2013.

NOTES

1. Moisés Batista, email message to the author, September 28, 2016.
2. "Pr. Moisés Batista – Presidente." Igreja Adventista do Sétimo Dia – Missão Pará Amapá, 2013, accessed September 29, 2016, <http://mpa.adventistas.org/blog/lider/pr-moisés-batista/>.
3. Moisés Batista, email message to the author, September 28, 2016.
4. "Elzira Mendes Bernardes," *Revista Adventista*, year 107, n. 1246, March 2012, 37.
5. Moisés Batista, email message to the author, September 28, 2016.

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