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# Central Brazil Adventist Academy

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The Instituto Adventista Brasil Central (Central Brazil Adventist Academy) (IABC) is an elementary and high school educational institution with a boarding school system. It belongs to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is part of the Adventist worldwide education network. It operates in the territory of the West Central Brazil Union Mission, located at BR 414 Highway, km 411, without number, in the rural zone of Planalmira, in the city of Abadiânia, in the state of Goiás.

In an area of 300,000 m,<sup>2</sup> there are female and male dormitory buildings, cafeteria, classrooms, library, sports area, and other facilities. In total, there are 693 students, of whom 380 are boarding students,<sup>1</sup> cared for and assisted by 91 servers, including school teachers, deans, coordinators, and others.

## Developments in the Establishment of the School

The Adventist message in Brazil arrived in Goiás in the 1920s. Jaulino Marques and Eudózio Mamede received the review “O Atalaia” (The Watchman) by mail. When they learned the gospel through this review, they made the decision to be baptized the following year. Their lives were changed from then on.<sup>2</sup> Four years later, Carlos Heinrich, a German doctor with missionary experience in Europe who wanted to preach the message in that Brazilian state, arrived in Goiás. He began by forming a small group in the state capital, Goiânia.<sup>3</sup>

In that same decade, after several baptisms and the increase in number of Adventists, the South Brazil Union Conference managed the churches in that territory. The conference sent another American missionary to Goiás, Pastor Alvin Nathan Allen, whose purpose was to study the implementation of more institutionalized work in the region. As a result, the Araguaia Native Mission was conceived, which covered the entire state of Goiás. Hence, the Adventist message spread, and the presence of Adventists increased in the state.<sup>4</sup>

## School Foundation

In 1980, with the well-developed church in Goiás and the advancement of educational work, the need for an Adventist boarding school in the region arose, considering that students had to move to schools in other states of the country. The Central Brazil Conference (CBRC), based in Goiânia, decided to intensify the search for an appropriate area to establish what would be the first Adventist boarding school in the Brazilian west central region.<sup>5</sup> To fulfill this task, the president of CBRC in 1981, Pastor Luiz Fuckner, with the help of Pastor Rafael Mário Ayupe from the Anápolis District, was commissioned to find land for construction of the school. Through their first efforts, IABC's construction work began, which would involve several students from that region.<sup>6</sup>

Upon receiving this responsibility of finding an ideal place for the construction of the boarding school, Pastor Fuckner began to search for an area approximately 33 miles (100 km.) from Goiania. Initially, its budget was 36,000 *Cruzeiros* (about US\$ 339 at the time). Since assuming the presidency of CBRC he had heard of an area to be donated by the state governor in the municipality of Anicuns. However, this area was not considered viable due to the distance. Relentlessly, Pastor Fuckner visited over forty areas in search of the best location.<sup>7</sup>

On July 3, 1981, the pastors were returning from another unsuccessful visit to a farm near BR-153, between the municipalities of Anápolis and Jaraguá. On the way, they stopped at a tax post. As they talked, one gentleman listened to what they were saying and understood that they were on a search for an area to build a school. This gentleman then appointed a realtor in the city of Anápolis who knew of a farm that would possibly serve that

purpose. However, the pastors thought that this would be another frustrated expectation.<sup>8</sup>

Considering the gentleman's insistence, the pastors decided to look for the realtor that very night. The next day they visited the Quilombo do Capivari farm, located in Planalmira and were convinced that this was the place. Some of the characteristics of the land made it the ideal place in Pastor Fuckner's opinion, as it was a well located, flat land in a high place. In addition, they discovered that this particular region was one of the least affected by temperature variations in Brazil, as in both summer and winter the temperature was pleasant.<sup>9</sup>

However, others thought that the land was not worth purchasing because it was not very attractive as there were only bushes around. According to Pastor Fuckner, there was only "a *pequi* tree and an old shack where a family lived." Later, when other fellow pastors visited the property, they did not understand the enthusiasm about the place, as it seemed so rustic and hostile. Still, Pastor Fuckner was convinced that this was the place and that it should be purchased.<sup>10</sup>

With renewed hopes, both pastors spoke with the owner, Mr. Adair Alves de Brito, to see how they could purchase the property. They discovered that the farm was practically sold for the installation of an alcohol distillery. However, the owner became interested in a boarding school project. As there were some obstacles in negotiating with the distillery, the owner set a price and gave a short deadline to close the deal. Pastors Fuckner, Rafael Mário Ayupi, Célio Feitosa (CBRC Education Department leaders), Nevil Gorski (South American Division Education Department leader), and Mr. José Borges dos Santos (Director of Anapolis Educational Center) visited the farm after which they scheduled a meeting to decide on the purchase of the property.<sup>11</sup>

On June 14, 1981, at 10 a.m., under a tree near the road that cut through the farm, a committee was convened to deliberate on the purchase. The members were Pastors Luiz Fuckner, Alci Oliveira, Célio Feitosa, Darci Borba, Adolfo Reis, João Wolf, Mário Veloso, Nevil Gorski, and Mr. José Borges. There the purchase of the property to build Central Brazil Adventist Academy was voted and approved. By June 23, 1981, Pastor Fuckner had the money in hand and the vote of approval of the commission for the purchase. Once the deal was concluded, the property was registered in an Abadiânia registry office. After that, in a field commission, Pastor Fuckner suggested that the boarding school be called Instituto Adventista Brasil Central [Central Brazil Adventist Academy] - a suggestion that was accepted by all.<sup>12</sup>

As soon as the property was registered, Pastor Fuckner felt that he had fulfilled his duty and that his participation in the great undertaking of building the first boarding school in the Brazilian Midwest had ended.<sup>13</sup> As soon as they acquired the property, work was begun immediately. At the end of 1982, with few resources for beginning the work, Pastor John Wolff suggested to Pastor Fuckner to seek help from a German foundation called Evangelical Centre for Development Aid (EZE),<sup>14</sup> which they did.<sup>15</sup>

To obtain funds from EZE, they drafted a letter of inquiry. The complex process, which spawned more than 20 kilograms of paperwork, requested 50% of the project value - which would be obtained as a donation. To secure the remainder, they sought help from the *Fundo de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento Social* (Social Development

Support Fund; FAS), an agency of the *Ministério da Educação* (Ministry of Education; MEC), which was the first time the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Brazil ever made a loan. The repayment term of fifteen years, with a two-year grace period and the interest subsidized.<sup>16</sup>

Even before the financial support of these two bodies was confirmed, the IASD leaders gathered in the center of that humble farm and laid the foundation stone of the school, with the book "Education" by the author Ellen G. White deposited in the ballot box. On December 22, 1981, the first director of the IABC was appointed, Mr. José Borges, who for some time maintained the function of director of both the Anapolis Educational Center and the IABC. At that time, his role at the boarding school was to keep track and direct projects to EZE and FAS, as well as expedite farm documentation and set up electricity and water networks.<sup>17</sup>

In March 1982, an EZE representative went to the farm to review the project and to see if it would actually be possible to approve the construction budget. It all depended on that analysis. During the long wait, Pastor Fuckner and Mr. José Borges sometimes thought that it was all an unreachable dream. However, in January 1983, their anguish ended when the positive reply letter arrived. On the 20th of that month, the contract was finally signed between EZE and USB. The amount of the donation was 1,200,000 German Mark, which was equivalent to 357,036,000.00 Cruzeiros (around US\$ 532,095.38) at the time of signing the contract. The money that would come from FAS was released in August 1983, bringing even more joy to all involved in the IABC project. On August 18th, at 11 a.m., the contract was signed between FAS and USB at the headquarters of the bank *Caixa Econômica Federal*, in Goiânia.<sup>18</sup>

On April 25, 1983, even before this last fund was released, Director Borges went to the farm with a team. The group was composed of a master builder, Raimundo Dias, two masons, Wilmar and Olegário, and Julian Garza, who went to the area to work on the farm. The first task of this team was to define the location of certain buildings, especially the school cafeteria, as well as to prepare for the official ceremony of the start of the work, which would occur that month and year with the budget they expected to achieve.<sup>19</sup>

That same day, April 25, 1983, construction on Central Brazil Adventist Academy began. The event was attended by the department leader of Central Brazil Conference, led by Pastor Luís Fuckner, President; Pastor Lauro Grelman, South Brazil Union Conference (SBUC) Treasurer; Pastor Nevil Gorski, South American Division (SAD) Education Leader; Pastor Haroldo Seidl, in charge of the SAD Project Department; Dr. Valdemar Wenzel, engineer of the project and teacher, and José Borges dos Santos, IABC Director. Pastor Darci Borba, SBUC President (Union Conference that assisted that territory at the time), was also present and thus construction of IABC's first building began, the cafeteria. The release of the funds contributed to the fast-track of the project.<sup>20</sup>

On May 24, 1983, the first material trucks arrived at the farm, which led to the creation of the electricity grid, water network, and buildings. The water tank was not installed until January 10, 1984, when IABC facilities were beginning to take shape. On June 4 of that year, several Adventists gathered at the boarding school and enjoyed the unfinished facilities. The event was attended by Pastor Neal Wilson, then President of the General

Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, along with his wife. He revealed that he was delighted with the location, the weather, the panoramic view, and the projects he found there.<sup>21</sup>

The goal of the managers was that by 1985 the IABC would be functioning with a primary and secondary school. Wilson Tavares was the first student to arrive at the school. He wanted to help with the building and guarantee a place as a student at the institution through his work. Under the same conditions, several others arrived, including Elias and José Alves in 1984, and Marcos, Gislaine, and Eldete in 1985 - students who all came from different states of Brazil. From February 28, 1985, regular students began to arrive, preparing for the beginning of the school year on March 4 of that year. The IABC aimed to provide quality education for underprivileged students, especially Adventists in that central region. Thus, it would not be necessary for students to travel to other regions of Brazil, far from where they lived.<sup>22</sup>

On the day classes began, as scheduled, the state deputy Idelfonso Avelar and the federal deputy Ademar Santilo, who was the state secretary of education, and who gave the inaugural address, were present. The teaching delegate from Anapolis, Professor Maria Angelina, was also present. At the end of the first school year there were about 120 students, of whom 100 were boarding students. Finally, on December 8, 1985, at 10 a.m., IABC was officially inaugurated, with the mission to educate for life and eternity.<sup>23</sup>

## School History

In order to function well, IABC activities were carefully planned. As early as November 1984 the first team of managers, teachers, and staff had been formed as follows: José Borges dos Santos, Director; Waldomiro Passos, Treasurer; Gercina Borges, Secretary; Osvaldo Toledo, Boys Dean; Neila Gomes, Girls Dean; Amir Rodovalho, Accountant; Nilce F. Santos, Cashier and Human Resources; Antonio Freitas, Procurement Officer; Elzi Freitas, Head Cook; Aparecida Bonfim, Head of Laundry; Benedito Batista, Head of Joinery; Julian Garza, Agriculture and Maintenance, and Daniel Martins, Master Builder. The teaching staff comprised: Osvaldo Toledo, Science and Pedagogy; Daniel Fiúza, Social Studies and Religious Education; Ester Fiúza, Portuguese and English; Silas Kanada, Mathematics, Chemistry, and Physics; Geni Toledo, Portuguese from third to sixth grade; Rute Rodovalho, first and second grades.<sup>24</sup> Including the teachers and management team, there were 19 employees.<sup>25</sup>

Between November 29 and December 1, 1984 the first camp meeting was held at IABC. A thousand Adventists from nearly 50 churches in the state of Goiás were present. On Friday night, director José Borges presented the history of the institution and the process of construction, from the initial stages when the property was acquired, three and a half years earlier to the present.<sup>26</sup>

In the early years of the school there were some structural difficulties. The radio telephone system was a major stalemate for communication.<sup>27</sup> In 1985, the first telephone antenna for IABC was installed. It was a flawed system, which made certain procedures difficult.<sup>28</sup> In addition, the highway that connected the school to

Anapolis, BR-414 was still being prepared to receive asphalt, so it was difficult to travel due to the large amount of dust and mud, which created puddles.<sup>29</sup> Soon after the structural completion of the school, the then governor of Goiás, Henrique Santillo, released approval for the construction of the streets within the school and donated the asphalt pavement of the IABC ring road.<sup>30</sup>

In October 1985, Mr. Enoch Silva, head dean, was appointed director.<sup>31</sup> Two months later IABC was officially opened, with the presence of the leaders of DSA and UCB and 250 students.<sup>32</sup> On June 4, 1989, the institute inaugurated buildings, technical facilities, livestock, as well as an athletics track, in addition to laying the foundation stones for other projects. Civil and military personnel, department officials from the Central Brazil Union Conference (UCB) and ABC, pastors, parents, and students, were present at the event. This was followed by the cutting of the library ribbon, opened by its patron, Dr. Hoyler, and the inaugurations of the laundry room, the mechanical milking complex, and the multipurpose athletics track.<sup>33</sup>

In 1990, progress was made in the agricultural, building and communications sectors, as well as academic progress. In addition, the institute had 35 dairy cows to supply its demand and was implementing the creation of goats and chickens with a dual purpose: to meet institutional needs and function as a laboratory in the practical classes of the agricultural course.<sup>34</sup>

That same year, the institution received a donation from Irmãos Nogueira Industry of a grain crusher. The agricultural section had 400,000 m<sup>2</sup> of land cultivated with soy, rice, and corn. The academic infrastructure was expanded with two more classrooms, using financial resources from MEC funds. The Telephone Center, which had a PABX enabled for 100 extensions, and the post office were completed. In the sports sector, construction began on the tennis court and the semi-olympic pool. The first graduation of the Technical Course in Agriculture, much sought after by students at the time, also occurred in 1990,<sup>35</sup> and on June 4 of that same year, IABC inaugurated the Pastor Jorge Hoyle Library, which at the time housed two thousand volumes.<sup>36</sup>

In 1991, the institution reached enrolled 352 students, of whom 232 were boarding students. IABC offered an elementary school and high school (1-12), in addition to a teacher-training college. Their project was to inaugurate the accounting course, with notions of computer, to build the music conservatory, laboratory, and to expand the school building.<sup>37</sup> The power grid represented a challenge for the institute, as it didn't work well and they often experienced power failure. For this reason, a generator was provided, inaugurated by Pastor José Borges dos Santos, in 1992, and is still working today.<sup>38</sup>

On November 22, 1999, Pastor Dário Gabriel, a former student of the institution, preached at the IABC Church in celebration of the institute's anniversary, which brought together former students. From that event, they formed the IABC former students association, whose president was Levi Ferreira.<sup>39</sup> In 2007, the institution launched the eight-month "IABC power" project, an intensive program to prepare students for the national entrance exam for public and private universities.<sup>40</sup> In 2010, when the institution celebrated 25 years of existence, it had a strong and solid physical structure. The institution had a music conservatory, pedagogical

sector, financial administration department, computer lab, entrance, nutrition sector (composed of the restaurant and kitchen), male and female dormitories, a garden, etc.<sup>41</sup>

In 2013, a new Seventh-day Adventist Church with a capacity for 600 people was inaugurated. According to Pastor Erton Köhler, President of the South American Division (DSA), this was a construction of paramount importance because it was the first building people saw from the highway in front of the school.<sup>42</sup> In 2017, the Missions Agency was opened and, since then, in addition to local missionary work, the school has traditionally offered help to the Xerente people of Tocantins state. From October 17-31, 2018 the first international IABC mission for students and staff was launched.<sup>43</sup> They traveled to Peru to carry out missionary activities on Amantani Island.<sup>44</sup>

Over the years, IABC has intensified its performance of important activities for a holistic training of students. Among them: the IABC camp, which takes place once a year and aims to remember the pioneering spirit of the great leaders who made history at the boarding school; the Friendship Festival, held every year alternately from girls to boys, or from boys to girls, aiming to strengthen the bond of brotherhood between students; the Talents Festival, which aims to acknowledge the school's great talents; the Woodland Worship Service, held every Saturday at sunrise;<sup>45</sup> the IABC Mission, a project that aims to prepare young people for the mission of preaching the gospel; and the Trainee Project, which works as a free course and allows young people to work in schools and conferences in several functions, from accounting to reception and telephone assistance, in order to prepare them for service in church institutions.<sup>46</sup>

Regarding the courses offered by IABC, on December 8, 2010, the institution's first post-graduation class was inaugurated. The postgraduate program aims to offer the institute's teachers and employees the opportunity to specialize in various areas of education. The goal is to further improve the quality of boarding school education.

<sup>47</sup> This project was launched in partnership with Faculdade Barão de Mauá [Barão de Mauá University] and offers several courses with an average duration of 12 months. These courses include: School Management; School Supervision and Guidance; Inclusive education; Environmental Education; Portuguese Language; Finance; and Labor Law.

For the IABC to become what it is today, many people have worked hard. Of special mention are the directors and other servers, beginning with the first director, Mr. José Borges, who faced great challenges in the early days of the boarding school. Many workers and supporters after him have contributed and made several advancements possible in terms of IABC's physical and pedagogical structure.

## Historical Role of the School

Central Brazil Adventist Academy is a reference for the city where it is located, for its infrastructure, educational system, activities offered, etc., as well as for its message. In addition, it is also a reference for the entire region served by the West Central Brazil Union Mission (UCoB), especially for Seventh-day Adventists. The boarding

school primarily serves students from states such as Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Distrito Federal, Goiás, and Tocantins, regions close to the institute, but it also receives students from other parts of the country.

IABC seeks to promote a healthy lifestyle, which allows students to develop in their own domain and assimilate values of discipline, respect, responsibility, integrity, friendship, kindness, patience, and faith in God. In addition to regular class assistance, students can count on practical, cultural, social, sporting activities, spiritual meetings, and voluntary service activities in nearby communities.<sup>48</sup>

Through the Missions Agency, students have periodically impacted the community where they are inserted, besides seeking other nearby regions to evangelize. However, missionaries are not restricted to the region alone, but have expanded their reach to the world, as in the 2018 Peru Mission, where several students and staff joined to preach the gospel to a particular community in that country.<sup>49</sup>

According to Pastor Erton Köhler, DSA president, IABC has become one of the great forces of Adventist education, not only in Brazil, but throughout South America. From a humble beginning, and by the grace of God, IABC boarding school is today a place where students can grow academically and benefit from the facilities and the good infrastructure offered, based on Christian principles and values which leave deep marks in their character.<sup>50</sup>

## What Remains to Fulfill the School's Mission

Currently, the school mission is to promote, through Adventist Christian education, a harmonious development of the students' physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual aspects, forming thinking citizens who will be useful to the community, to the country, and to God.<sup>51</sup> Considering the school journey, pioneered in a semi-arid land, IABC has increasingly become an example of an educational institution through the efforts of many people. The efforts of the servers to fulfill their mission with the enrolled students is remarkable.<sup>52</sup>

What has most attracted young people to the boarding school in the central west of the country is, without a doubt, the teaching philosophy, a path that it must continue. The quality and comfort of the structure offered by the institution are attractive. In the future, it is possible to imagine the increasing risk of the physical and moral integrity of teenagers in large cities. Parents are too busy with their work and do not have time to offer activities that promote student growth. Because of this and other factors IABC must present itself as a Christian option to meet these expectations, fulfilling God's purposes through the school.<sup>53</sup>

## Directors List

José Borges dos Santos (1982-1985); Enoch Silva (1985-1989); José Borges dos Santos (1990-1993); José Roberto Reis (1994-1996); Willer C. Prego (1996); Héber de Oliveira (1997-1998); Rui Manuel Mendonça Lopes (1999-2001); Osni Sales de Oliveira (2002-2006); José Aparecido (2006-2009); Wesley Zukowski (2009-2016); Samuel

Bruno (2016-currently).<sup>54</sup>

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52. “Entrevista com o diretor Wesley Zukowski” [Interview with director Wesley Zukowski], *IABC Review 25 Years*, 2010, 37.

53. Ibid.

54. Further information about IABC can be found on the following website: <https://www.iabc.org.br>. or on social media: Facebook IABC Colégio Adventista, Twitter @IABCoficial, or YouTube Channel IABC Colégio Adventista.

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