

# Casaca, Armando José Simão

## (1921–1991)

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Armando José Simão Casaca was a pastor, evangelist, and church administrator in Portugal. Casaca and his wife, Fernanda, were missionaries to Angola for 15 years. Casaca was also a pastor in Brazil.

### Early Years

Armando José Simão Casaca was born September 5, 1921, in the Portuguese city of Coimbra, but was raised in the city of Portalegre. When he was still a child, his father was invited to work in the Belgian Congo for a secular enterprise. His mother, Emília Casaca, thinking that it would be hazardous to raise her children in such an inhospitable environment, decided to leave them in the care of one of her sisters, whom the children called “Tia Carolina” (Aunt Caroline). Tia Carolina was a devout Seventh-day Adventist and raised her nephew in the faith. On May 4, 1940, Casaca accepted the Adventist message and was baptized at the age of 18. Coincidentally, Fernanda Ribeiro, his wife to be, was baptized on the same day and in the same church. After his baptism and with the desire to serve God, Casaca immediately went to Lisbon and enrolled in the Adventist Bible course coordinated by Pastor António Dias Gomes. After a year of studies, he finished his pastoral training.<sup>1</sup>

### Into the Ministry

Casaca did his pastoral internship in Oporto. Later he was sent to Coimbra, the city where he was born, but he remained there for only a short time. In the summer of 1943 Casaca married Fernanda Ribeiro. Soon after they were called to serve as missionaries in Angola. There Casaca began his work as a teacher at the Luz Mission. Then he was sent to be a teacher in the well-known Bongo Mission, and a couple years later he was appointed director of the mission.

Armando later became director of the Youth Department of the Angola Union and director of the mission fields of Bongo and Nova Lisboa. His 15 years of earnest labor in Angola earned him the appreciation of his fellow workers and, especially, of the Angolan youth. His future ministry included additional responsibilities.

In December 1958, he was elected president of the Portuguese Union. He served in this capacity until December 1968. Making evangelism his priority, his goal was to reach all people living in the territories that fell under his jurisdiction. He urged all the workers to multiply their evangelistic meetings and, in addition, he promoted the development of home missionary work. In a bid to achieve his aim, he united the efforts of the gospel workers with that of the laity. By so doing, Casaca introduced a new missionary spirit in the Portuguese Union. Three evangelistic strategies promoted by Casaca merit mention here.

The first was the creation of *Telemensagem* (*Telemessage*). *Telemensagem* was the use of prerecorded telephonic messages which transmitted the values of the gospel. The public was invited through intensive advertisement to dial a certain telephone number and listen to the gospel messages. In the first month of operation alone there were 5,000 calls. This was the first time that such a communication strategy was used in Portugal by a religious institution. Second was the creation and the systematic implementation of the Bible course *A Bíblia Responde* (*The Bible Answers*). This Bible course was designed to be used in all home missionary activities and in the union's Bible correspondence school. The third strategy was the creation of *A Voz da Esperança* (*The Voice of Hope*), an Adventist Radio Program that was aired on some of the main Portuguese radio stations. As a result of the missionary zeal promoted by Casaca, during his term as union president, 13 new chapels were inaugurated and about 2,426 persons were baptized.

In March 1969 he stepped down as president. That same year he was called back to Angola to serve as the union president. He did a fine work under the difficult political and social circumstances of the period. The war for independence in Angola started in 1961. This created severe difficulties for the administration of the Adventist work there. However, Casaca was able to maintain the steady progress in the evangelization of Angola. By the end of his tenure, 68 new churches had been established in the Angolan territory, and there were 24,182 European and African baptized believers.

In 1975, with the independence of Angola, Casaca and his family returned to Portugal because the volatile political situation rendered impracticable the permanence of Portuguese nationals on Angolan soil. On his return he was entrusted with the Cascais church which he pastored for a short time.

In 1976 he and his wife traveled to Brazil to visit their son Carlos. While he was there, Casaca received an invitation to work as a pastor in Brazil, and he accepted the invitation. From 1976 until 1982, he pastored several Brazilian churches, the last being the Moema church. In 1982 Casaca retired, but he continued to collaborate in the making of the telephonic program *Telepaz* (*Telepeace*). He died December 4, 1991, in São Paulo, Brazil.<sup>2</sup>

## Contribution

Pastor Armando Casaca made an important contribution to the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Angola and in Portugal. He was an intrepid missionary and gained the respect and the affection of Angola's youth. His work as president of the Angola Union was the climax of the Portuguese missionary activity in that

African country. He wisely administered the Angolan field in the last six years of the Portuguese presence there and left a consolidated operation in spite of all the difficulties brought by the fierce war during the pro-independence movements. He was also an energetic president of the Portuguese Union, always promoting the advance of the Adventist message in his fatherland. Casaca's legacy lives on in his creation of the Adventist telephonic program for evangelistic purposes. He is also remembered for uniting the efforts of gospel workers and lay people in Portugal. In addition, he was a catalyst in the development of the Portuguese Home Missionary work. Moreover, the Voice of Hope, which was started during his time as union president continues to be used as a means to spread the gospel in Portugal.

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## SOURCES

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## NOTES

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2. Ferreira, *Arautos de Boas Novas*, 233-245; Baptista, "Aguardando a Ressurreição," 23; José E. Rodrigue, "Justo tributo a um obreiro que deixa Angola," *Revista Adventista*, January 1959, 7; Alexandre Justino. *Pregoeiros da Verdade Presente: História da Igreja Adventista do Sétimo Dia em Angola 1924-2004* (Benedita: Edição do Autor, 2007), 196.

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