

# Stabenow, Paulo

## (1935–2015)

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### THE BRAZILIAN WHITE CENTER – UNASP

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Paulo Stabenow

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Paulo Stabenow, pastor and administrator, was born March 11, 1935, in Laranja da Terra, in the old district of the city of Afonso Cláudio, state of Espírito Santo, Brazil.<sup>1</sup> He was the son of Carl Stabenow (1895-1980) and Guilhermina Krüger Stabenow (1895-1974).<sup>2</sup> His ten siblings were: Germano (1916-2002), Lydia (1917-1996),<sup>3</sup> Alberto (1919-1992), Floriano (1921-1950), Martinho,<sup>4</sup> Holdina (1924-2014),<sup>5</sup> Elza (1927-1946), Zeferino,<sup>6</sup> Samuel<sup>7</sup> and Waldemar.<sup>8</sup>

Paulo grew up in an Adventist home where his parents taught Christian principles to their children. He was encouraged to study the Bible and to keep the Sabbath.<sup>9</sup> He was baptized in September 1946 in the city of Laranja da Terra. Paulo attended elementary school at a local Adventist school and completed high school at the Petrópolis Adventist Academy.<sup>10</sup> From an early age he wanted to become a merchant and open a chain of

stores. However, in 1956, while studying at the academy, he participated in the Youth Congress of the South American Division held at Hotel Quitandinha in Rio de Janeiro. When he heard the sermon by Pastor Rodolpho Belz, Paul felt the desire to become a pastor.<sup>11</sup> With this purpose, in 1957 he went to the Brazil College where he studied theology, graduating in 1961.<sup>12</sup> That same year he married Iracilda Rodrigues Stabenow (1940-).<sup>13</sup> She worked as a teacher<sup>14</sup> and served as director of Youth Ministries in the Vale do Paulista Mission.<sup>15</sup> From this union were born Elizabeth (1963-) and Paulo Roberto (1970-).<sup>16</sup>

After his graduation from the seminary Paulo did not immediately receive a call, so he provided for his family by selling natural products at a São Paulo fair. Two months later he received two calls. One was to be an administrative assistant at the Silvestre Adventist Hospital in Rio de Janeiro, and the other one was to be a district pastor in the city of Nanuque, state of Minas Gerais. Because he had the desire to be a pastor, he accepted the second invitation.<sup>17</sup> He stayed in that position until 1966, when he was ordained to the ministry in the local newly dedicated church.<sup>18 19</sup>

From 1967-1969 he served as a district pastor in the city of Vitória, state of Espírito Santo.<sup>20</sup> During this period he sought to prepare himself to better serve the denomination by taking a theology specialization at River Plate Adventist University in the city of Libertador San Martín, province of Entre Rios, Argentina.<sup>21</sup> In 1970 he was appointed director of the Stewardship Department of the former East Brazil Union Conference. He moved to the city of Niterói in the state of Rio de Janeiro and stayed there until 1973.<sup>22</sup> In 1974 he was elected president of the former Minas Gerais Mission.<sup>23</sup> Between 1974 and 1975 he worked as director of the departments of Stewardship, Public Relations, and Temperance.<sup>24</sup> He held that position for nearly ten years<sup>25</sup> and, in 1983, he was appointed director of the office responsible for food companies operated by the South American Division, where he remained until 1988.<sup>26</sup>

In 1989 he was invited to be director of the Stewardship Department of the Central Brazil Union Conference, in the city of Artur Nogueira, São Paulo. He stayed there until 1990.<sup>27</sup> In 1991 he was elected president of the Paulista Leste Conference, where he stayed until 2001.<sup>28</sup> The following year the São Paulo Paraíba Valley Mission was organized and he was invited to be the first president. He continued in this position until the end of his active ministry.<sup>29</sup>

Paulo retired in July 2006 after nearly 44 years of service to the Adventist church.<sup>30</sup> In the years following retirement, he faced some cardiac problems,<sup>31</sup> but he still responded to invitations to preach and lecture when he could.<sup>32</sup> He died of pneumonia at the age of 80 on April 2, 2015, in the city of São José dos Campos, state of São Paulo. He was buried in the city of São Paulo.<sup>33</sup> He made a significant contribution to Adventist organizations in the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Minas Gerais, besides managing Adventist food companies for the South American Division.

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