

Prates, Moysés Rocha (1926–2022)

THE BRAZILIAN WHITE CENTER – UNASP (2)

The Brazilian White Center – UNASP (2) is a team of teachers and students at the Brazilian Ellen G. White Research Center – UNASP at the Brazilian Adventist University, Campus Engenheiro, Coelho, SP. The team was supervised by Drs. Adolfo Semo Suárez, Renato Stencel, and Carlos Flávio Teixeira. The following are the team members: Melissa Querido Batista, Priscila Carvalho dos Santos, Allan Sleyter Soares de Atayde, Jonatan Ferreira Nascimento, and Leo Eduardo Menegusso Valenzi.

Moysés Rocha Prates was a pastor, director, and teacher, and served in many other ways in the Seventh-day Adventist Church work, being an important pioneer, especially in the education and music fields.¹



Moysés Rocha Prates

Photo courtesy of Brazilian White Center-UNASP.

Early Life and Education

Moysés Rocha Prates was born on July 14, 1926, in Jacaraci, in the state of Bahia, Brazil, son of Olavo Rocha and Antônia Maria da Rocha.² He had seven siblings: Leodonir, Altímia, Francisco, José, Maria, Balbino, and Santos.³

Moysés spent part of his childhood on his parents' farm in the interior of Bahia, where he worked with animals and led a quiet life in the countryside.⁴ In 1929, his father bought a farm near Taiobeiras, Minas Gerais, where Moysés would have his first contact with primary education, through a private tutor. While still young, he worked cutting firewood, guiding the oxen that plowed the land, and tending the rice field. One day, while cutting firewood, a splinter got into his eye. After unsuccessfully seeking help in São Paulo, Antônia decided, at the suggestion of her neighbors, to drip drops of blood from Moysés's right ring finger into his injured eye. The "treatment" further aggravated the situation, causing the young man to develop strabismus and cataracts in his left eye, an ailment that would only be remedied at the end of his ministry, in the 1980s.⁵

Around the age of 12, he moved with his family to the capital of the state of São Paulo, where he attended elementary school and began working in a shoe store, completing the fourth grade in 1941.⁶ In his childhood, Moysés' family was not Adventist, but Catholic. His mother used to take him to a place to fulfill promises in the hope of curing his vision problem.⁷ However, one day his brother Cícero Pereira da Silva began studying the

Bible with one of Moysés' older brothers, converting him and, through him, his parents and siblings. He would be baptized in 1942 by Pastor Manoel Margarido at the Vila Matilde Church, located in the city of São Paulo.⁸

In 1945, he entered the Brazilian Adventist College (CAB), now [UNASP-SP](#), where he completed high school and the scientific course, graduating in 1948. He graduated in Theology in 1951 from the same institution.

Subsequently, he studied and completed a degree in Neo-Latin Languages in 1959. Later, he also graduated in Law in 1978 from the Bragança Paulista Law School (Faculdade de Direito Bragança Paulista), passing the Brazilian Bar Association exam in 1979.⁹

Personal Life and Ministry

Moysés met his wife, Noemy Andrade, when she was his student in the entrance course at the São Paulo Adventist Academy (now [Brazil Adventist University \[Hortolândia\]](#) campus). They married on June 23, 1950, when she was 16 years old. As a result of this union, they had eight biological children and one adopted daughter: Gerson, Eliezer, Ezer, Eli, Elison, Gerseli, Erli, Erelí, and Izabel.¹⁰

Even before finishing his Theology degree, Moysés had been working as a teacher at the São Paulo Adventist Academy since 1949. He was part of the institution's first faculty, being responsible for the student entrance course.¹¹ As a pastor, he started his ministry in 1951, working at the former Northeast Brazil College (now UNIAENE), then located in Belém de Maria, in the state of Pernambuco, where, in addition to teaching religion, he taught Portuguese, French, and Latin. Between 1953 and 1954, he was a teacher at the Brazilian Adventist College.¹² Later, he returned to work at the São Paulo Adventist Academy on January 2, 1955. There, in addition to serving as a teacher until his retirement, Moysés held the positions of: vice-director (he was the first person appointed to the position, in 1959); substitute director of the Commercial College (or accounting technician, the first high school course at São Paulo Adventist Academy), in 1969; director of secondary education, in 1972 and 1977; internal director, between 1974 and 1979; and general director, from 1983 to 1985, when he retired after more than 30 years of service.¹³

Noemy was also a church worker, beginning her work on March 1, 1973, at the same institution where her husband worked, serving as an elementary school teacher. In addition, she served the local church as a deaconess and actively participated in the children's ministry, while Moysés contributed as an elder.¹⁴

The couple contributed significantly to the Church, especially through educational work, to which they dedicated themselves fully. Moysés lived at the school, always present at the institution and in direct contact with the students, acting as both manager and teacher. One of their sons, Eli, recounts that he looked up to his father and pursued a career as a grammar teacher. He admired his father's rigorous and fair manner and valued his mother's dedication to the students and children.¹⁵

On a certain occasion, Pastor Moysés, along with the Musart group, held an evangelistic series in the city of Nova Odessa, São Paulo. Every night, they had a time set aside to sing and participate in the program. Over time, a church was established on the site as a result of this work. His daughter, Erelí, shared a memory that showed a glimpse of her father's care. She recounts that on one occasion she was riding her bicycle around the main building, where her father was attending an important meeting. At one point, a girl stepped in front of her, and she fell on the newly laid asphalt. Crying and injured, Erelí entered the room where the meeting was taking place, and her father immediately stopped everything to take her to the infirmary. He stayed with her until all her injuries were treated, setting aside important work matters to care for his daughter.¹⁶

Artistic Contribution

As a pastor, he sought to reach people in different ways, with music being one of his main tools. For this reason, he created a family ensemble called *Musart*, which later became *Prisma Família*. In addition, he was the founder of the group now known as *Prisma Brasil*,¹⁷ which has millions of monthly views on YouTube, has sold over 7 million albums, and reaches people from various religious denominations.¹⁸

Final Years and Legacy

Pastor Moysés, even after his retirement, assisted the Church in some legal cases.¹⁹ He worked in different areas throughout his ministry, remaining especially active in the musical field, dedicatedly supporting the musical groups he founded. He had a special fondness for biblical passages that speak of a new Heaven and a new Earth, and his favorite hymn was "Saudade" (Longing).²⁰ Moysés Prates passed away due to complications from COVID-19 on January 28, 2022.²¹

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. "Memória." *Revista Adventista*, 117, no. 1379 (March 2022): 47.

2. Eli Rocha Prates, interviewed by Melissa Querido, Centro de Pesquisas Ellen G. White: UNASP campus Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, 2024.
3. Diói Cruz. "Vida e Obra do Pastor Moysés Rocha Prates." *Monograph*, Instituto Adventista de Ensino, 1988.
4. Eli Rocha Prates, interviewed by Melissa Querido, Centro de Pesquisas Ellen G. White: UNASP campus Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, 2024.
5. Diói Cruz. "Vida e Obra do Pastor Moysés Rocha Prates." *Monograph*, Instituto Adventista de Ensino, 1988.
6. Eli Rocha Prates, interviewed by Melissa Querido, Centro de Pesquisas Ellen G. White: UNASP campus Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, 2024.
7. Ibid.
8. Diói Cruz. "Vida e Obra do Pastor Moysés Rocha Prates." *Monograph*, Instituto Adventista de Ensino, 1988.
9. Eli Rocha Prates, interviewed by Melissa Querido, Centro de Pesquisas Ellen G. White: UNASP campus Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, 2024.
10. Ibid.; Diói Cruz. "Vida e Obra do Pastor Moysés Rocha Prates." *Monograph*, Instituto Adventista de Ensino, 1988, 19-20.
11. Diói Cruz. "Vida e Obra do Pastor Moysés Rocha Prates." *Monograph*, Instituto Adventista de Ensino, 1988, 24, 26; Hermenérico Moraes. SANTOS, Luís H. IASP: 60 anos transformando vidas. Hortolândia, SP: Multicomm, 2009, 68-69.
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13. Eli Rocha Prates, interviewed by Melissa Querido, Centro de Pesquisas Ellen G. White: UNASP campus Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, 2024; Diói Cruz. "Vida e Obra do Pastor Moysés Rocha Prates." *Monograph*, Instituto Adventista de Ensino, 1988, 21-25; Hermenérico Moraes. SANTOS, Luís H. IASP: 60 anos transformando vidas. Hortolândia, SP: Multicomm, 2009, 68-69, 124-125.
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15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
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18. "Nossa História." *Prisma Brasil*.
19. Diói Cruz. "Vida e Obra do Pastor Moysés Rocha Prates." *Monograph*, Instituto Adventista de Ensino, 1988, 25.
20. "Memória." *Revista Adventista*, 117, no. 1379 (March 2022): 47.

21. Ibid.

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