

Katwinkel, Otto

(1881–1967)

THE BRAZILIAN WHITE CENTER – UNASP

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Otto Katwinkel

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Otto Katwinkel, an Adventist pioneer in Brazil, was born in 1881 in Glattbach, located in the Aschaffenburg district, Bavaria, Germany. Son of Guilherme and Guilhermina Katwinkel, he came from a family of Jewish ancestry who experienced severe persecution. When Otto was still a child, his father was abducted and disappeared. Later, he lost his mother as well, becoming an orphan.¹

Helena and Friedrich Wilhelm Kämpel adopted Otto and taught him about Seventh-day Adventism. Helena had been baptized as a Sabbatist in Germany in 1866, and later became a Seventh-day Adventist while still in Europe

The Kämpels appear on the first membership list of the Vohwinkel church, Germany, organized in January of 1876 as a result of Swiss pastor Jacob Erzberger's evangelistic efforts. Both the Kämpel and the Lindermann

families came from the Sabbatist church Die Getaufte Christengemeinde (The Baptized Christian Community), founded by Johann Heinrich Lindermann in 1856. It observed the Sabbath and believed in the soon return of Jesus. Nearly all the members of Lindermann's church became Adventists.² In December 1892, a large part of the Kämpel family emigrated to Brazil, including Friedrich, Helena, Otto, and others, along with the Lindermann family. It is uncertain if all of them were baptized members.³

Soon after their arrival, the Kämpels and the Lindermanns settled in the German colony of São Pedro do Sul, near Santa Maria, state of Rio Grande do Sul. Formed in 1829, it was one of the important German colonies established in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. However, the Kämpels did not remain there very long. In 1893, they moved to another region that later came to be called Boa Vista do Guilherme, located in the city of Não-Me-Toque, today Lagoa dos Três Cantos.⁴

There the family organized a group of Bible studies along with the Reis family, who considered it curious that the Kämpels did not work on Saturdays, and by their influence also became Adventists. The Adventist message reached many other people through the Kämpel family. When Pastor Huldreich Graf arrived there in 1898 along with Schwantes, he found "a field well prepared for us." Eleven days after their arrival, on October 27, 1898, Graf organized the Não-Me-Toque church, baptizing five Kämpel children and 40 Brazilian nationals, totalizing 48 members. It was the twelfth Adventist church organized in Brazil and the first Portuguese-speaking one in the country since the other ones spoke German.⁵

Graf baptized Otto Katwinkel who became the head of the Não-Me-Toque Church for many years as well as choir director. He never worked as an employee of the Adventist Church, but labored as a carpenter and farmer. After receiving a plot of land from the government, he became responsible for making sure that neighboring countries did not encroach on Brazilian border territory.⁶

Otto married Maria Kämpel, daughter of his adoptive parents, with whom he had 10 children: Arnaldo, João, Otília, Reinoudo, Ana, Erwino, Elvira, Artur, and two others who died young. Maria died June 23, 1964, at the age of 77, and Otto, on February 24, 1967, at the age of 85.⁷

Otto Katwinkel is a significant name in Brazilian Seventh-day Adventist Church. He was part of the first German-speaking Adventists that emigrated to Brazilian territory. Living in Rio Grande do Sul, they were forerunners of Adventism in Brazil at a time when no official Adventist work yet existed in the territory. Otto Katwinkel made a significant contribution as head of the Não-Me-Toque Church.

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NOTES

1. Edeamar Kattwinkel, interviewed by Elvis Eli Martins Filho, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, February 20, 2020.; Edir Wolff, "Otto Katwinkel," *Revista Adventista*, July 7, 1967, 34.
2. Edgar Link, "Raízes da Nossa História," *Revista Adventista*, December, 2017, 7; Huldreich Graf, "Travels in Rio Grande do Sul," *The Missionary Magazine*, June 1899, 239.
3. Floyd Greenleaf, *Terra de Esperança: o crescimento da Igreja Adventista na América do Sul* (Tatuí, SP: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2011), 24.; Edeamar Katwinkel, interviewed by Elvis Eli Martins Filho, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, February 20, 2020.; Héctor J. Pevevini, *En Las Huellas de La Providencia* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Asociacion Casa Editora Sudamericana, 1988), 76, 77; Edgar Link, "Raízes da Nossa História," *Revista Adventista*, December, 2017, 7.

4. Floyd Greenleaf, *Terra de Esperança: o crescimento da Igreja Adventista na América do Sul* (Tatuí, SP: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2011), 24.; Edegar Katwinkel, interviewed by Elvis Eli Martins Filho, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, February 20, 2020.; Alberto R. Timm, *Igreja Adventista de Campos dos Quevedos 1905-2005* (Engenheiro Coelho, SP: Unaspress, 2005), 15.
5. Edgar Link, "Raízes da Nossa História," *Revista Adventista*, December 2017, 6; Alberto R. Timm, *Igreja Adventista de Campos dos Quevedos 1905-2005* (Engenheiro Coelho, SP: Unaspress, 2005), 15; Edgar Link, Edegar Kattwinkel, interviewed by Elvis Eli Martins Filho, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, February 20, 2020.; Edir Wolff, "Otto Katwinkel," *Revista Adventista*, July 7, 1967, 34; Edgar Link, "Raízes da Nossa História," *Revista Adventista*, December, 2017, 7; Huldreich Graf, "Travels in Rio Grande do Sul," *The Missionary Magazine*, June 1899, 239; Floyd Greenleaf, *Terra de Esperança: o crescimento da Igreja Adventista na América do Sul* (Tatuí, SP: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2011), 24.; Edegar Katwinkel, interviewed by Elvis Eli Martins Filho, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, February 20, 2020.; Héctor J. Peverini, *En Las Huellas de La Providencia* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Asociacion Casa Editora Sudamericana, 1988), 76, 77; Edgar Link, "Raízes da Nossa História," *Revista Adventista*, December, 2017, 7; Floyd Greenleaf, *Terra de Esperança: o crescimento da Igreja Adventista na América do Sul* (Tatuí, SP: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2011), 24.; Edegar Katwinkel, interviewed by Elvis Eli Martins Filho, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, February 20, 2020.; Alberto R. Timm, *Igreja Adventista de Campos dos Quevedos 1905-2005* (Engenheiro Coelho, SP: Unaspress, 2005), 15; Edgar Link, "Raízes da Nossa História," *Revista Adventista*, December 2017, 6; Alberto R. Timm, *Igreja Adventista de Campos dos* "Direto nas Fontes," *Revista Adventista*, November 2013, 27.; H. Graf, "One Hundred Days on Muleback," *The Missionary Magazine*, June 1899, 249.
6. Edegar Katwinkel, interviewed by Elvis Eli Martins Filho, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, February 20, 2020; Edir Wolff, "Otto Katwinkel," *Revista Adventista*, July 1967, 34; E. H. Wilcox, "Não-Me-Toque," *South American Bulletin*, June 1931, 6.
7. Edegar Katwinkel, interviewed by Elvis Eli Martins Filho, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, February 20, 2020; Edir Wolff, "Otto Katwinkel," *Revista Adventista*, July 1967, 34.

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