Parana Adventist College

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Parana Adventist College (Instituto Adventista Paranaense, IAP) offers early childhood, elementary, high school, and undergraduate education. It belongs to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Brazil and is part of the worldwide Adventist education network. It operates in the mission field of the South Brazil Union, at km 119 on the State Highway PR-317 (Maringá - Campo Mourão), Zip Code 87130-000, glebe Paiçandu, Lot 80, Countryside, in the municipality of Ivatuba, in the state of Paraná, Brazil.

The school’s buildings and facilities comprise a total of 1,768.16 m² of built area. The facilities include male and female dormitories, a cafeteria, gardening area, security post, administrative offices, a sports complex, a heated pool, the music and English school, the gymnasium, a medical clinic, a grocery store, and the library. Parana Adventist College offers courses in Administration, Accounting, Nursing, Pedagogy, Psychology, and Theology. The college also offers eight postgraduate courses. In 2020, there were around a thousand students, served by 62 teachers, nine ordained ministers, and 406 other employees.

Development that Led to the School’s Establishment

The state of Paraná borders the state of São Paulo on the north and the state of Santa Catarina on the south. These regions are some of the most developed regions in Brazil, especially in agriculture. The north region of Paraná, where
Parana Adventist College is located, experienced rapid growth and expansion in the 1930s. One of the great advances for the state and for the Adventist work in the area was the arrival of the São Paulo-Paraná Railway in the city of Londrina and other cities in 1935. The places that before could only be reached by precarious and muddy roads were now accessible by modern British locomotives brought by the Land Company North of Paraná (Companhia de Terras Norte do Paraná). The first Adventists from the interior of São Paulo came to the state of Paraná on these trains.3

The history of Parana Adventist College can be traced to 1935 and the city of Benedito Novo, the state of Santa Catarina, when certain Adventist families of German descent established Benedito Novo School (Colégio Benedito Novo).4 At the time, the school offered primary and junior high school education.5 However, the school was eventually closed by the government, and the church leaders of Paraná and Santa Catarina region had to find another location to establish a new school. Pastor José Passos, then president of the Paraná-Santa Catheira Mission (currently Santa Catarina Conference), together with the Colaço and Linhares families, contributed to the emergence of the new school. These families donated the land for the construction of the school in the district of Butiá, the state of Paraná.6

Developments that Led to the School Establishment

The new school was established by Pastor Germano Ritter in the district of Butiá dos Colaços, in the city of Lapa, the state of Paraná, in 1939. The school filled the need left by the closing of Benedito Novo School in Santa Catarina.7 The location of the new school had easy easy access to the cities of Rio Negro and Mafra, on the Santa Catarina side, and Lapa, on the Paraná side. A railroad and a highway connected these cities and came near the school. Soon the new school was named Butiá Adventist School (Educiandário Adventista de Butiá, EAB). The classes were taught in Portuguese and German, which attracted small farmers from the surrounding German colonies.8

In the 1930s and 1940s, the church faced an important decision whether to seek government accreditation of Butiá Adventist School and other Adventist schools. The people who opposed the plan to obtain government accreditation feared that the government would unduly interfere in the way the Adventists were educated. Thus, in the administrative meetings of the Paraná-Santa Catarina Mission, held from July 31 to August 2, 1939, the vote was taken not to seek the government accreditation for the school. President G. G. Ritter and Secretary F. H. Gerling approved the minutes with the vote.9

Although it was not accredited by the government, Butiá Adventist School prioritized quality education. Its stated goal was to provide Christian education to the youth, especially the Adventist youth at the elementary level. Among the faculty pioneers were Rosa and Werner Frank called to work in 1939. Shortly after them, the first principal, Waldemar Ehlers, and the school pastor, Eugênio Weidle, were appointed.

In December 1944, the first Butiá Adventist School graduation ceremony took place in the local Adventist church.10 That same year, Pastor Romeo Ritter took over the direction of the school and proposed to transfer the school to a location closer to the city of Curitiba. One of the reasons given for this change was the need for the students to go to the state schools located in the city to take their final exams called “exames de madureza” (maturity exams) and thus validate their studies. Another challenge in those days was the fact that these exams were often on Sabbath and sometimes Adventist students were not given the opportunity to take them on another day. Moving the school closer to the city as well as obtaining recognition from the government bodies were seen as measures that could solve the problem with the final exams.11 Another factor in favor of relocating the school was to avoid the frequent flooding of the Negro River, which affected the road and made access to the school difficult. Thus, in November 1947, the school buildings, which were wooden, were dismantled and reinstalled in a new location, about 15 km from the downtown of Curitiba, near the Barigui railway station.12 In 1948, the name of Butiá Adventist School was changed to Barigui Adventist School (Educiandário Adventista do Barigui, EAB).13

History of the Institution

Classes began in March 1948, shortly after the classrooms and the laboratory were reinstalled in the new place.14 With the transfer of the school to the outskirts of Curitiba, the government recognition of the school was obtained on September 12, 1949 (the Government Ordinance number 416). The academic curriculum needed to be adapted to meet the Brazilian government’s requirements, including having Portuguese as the only language of instruction. At the time, such regulations had to be obeyed by both the public and the private schools under penalty of closure.15

In 1950, Barigui Adventist School changed its name to Paraná-Santa Catarina Academy (Ginásio Adventista Paranaense, GAP). The same year, the first brickwork buildings were erected in compliance with the requirements of the Brazilian government. The school building and the male dormitory were built first. To accommodate the growing number of students increased, three more residences were built and the streets and gardens of the campus were paved. In 1950 the elementary school registered 43 new enrollments.16

A new name change occurred in 1964 when the school came to be called Paraná Academy (Instituto Adventista Paranaense, IAP). The previous name was no longer considered appropriate to reflect the new profile of the school, which now offered education at the elementary and high school levels. The school offered the Accounting Technical program integrated with the high school. The same year (1964), 275 students were enrolled. Paraná Academy was close to the city but in the countryside with the land that had forests, fertile soil, orchards, and pastures for cattle. The school also had facilities for the operation of workshops and industrial production, in addition to 13 classrooms, five of them adapted to meet the specific requirements for the Industrial Arts, Music, Commercial and Agricultural
Techniques, and Education for the Home programs, a science laboratory, a library (with 4,700 volumes), auditorium (with 450 seats and which also served as a church), sports facilities (indoors and outdoors), swimming pool, dormitories, and staff residences. Following the Adventist ideal for boarding schools, Paraná Academy set aside part of its land for its own food production. In 1958, for example, the school produced 800 bags of potatoes, 300 bags of rice, and several tons of tomatoes. The agricultural activity was diversified and, in 1970, daily production of 200 liters of milk was registered. The surplus of the agricultural produce that was not used in the school cafeteria was sold in the local shops. In the same year, teaching activities began with 120 students enrolled in elementary education. And thus, the school expanded its influence as an educational institution on the outskirts of Curitiba.

However, that same year (1970), Paraná Academy received a letter from the city of Curitiba council informing the school of their decision to build an industrial zone in the region where the school’s land was located. Thus, the school could no longer function there. The government followed with the plans and on July 8, 1973, the work of implantation of the Industrial City of Curitiba began. In the same year, on November 8, the church purchased a new property for the new Paraná Academy facilities. The chosen place was in the municipality of Ivatuba, in the northwest of the state of Paraná, around 25 km from the city of Maringá.

The cornerstone of what would become the new campus of Paraná Academy was laid on August 12, 1974. Soon the construction began and shortly the first buildings were completed. In December 1975, the first elementary school graduation took place with 27 students. Shortly after, on May 19, 1977, under the leadership of Director Irineu Rosales and the campus Pastor Cesar Augusto Costa, the cornerstone of the Paraná Academy church building was laid.

In early 1980, 372 students were enrolled, exceeding the maximum dormitory capacity. Consequently, the school's facilities had to be improved to serve the growing number of students. The same year, the harvest reached the mark of 10,000 bags of various cereals, such as corn and soybeans. The school's cow milk was qualified as the first type "A" approved in Brazil and started to be sold in the region. In the academic area, the following courses were offered at high school level: Basics in Health; Basics in Agriculture; Accounting Technician; and Teaching qualification.

At this rate of progress, the school sought to remain faithful to its primary mission of preaching the gospel for the advancement of God’s kingdom. In 1993, the school was involved in the evangelistic campaigns carried out in the cities of Itambé, Floresta, and Ivatuba. The average daily attendance of meetings reached two hundred people who were interested in knowing more about the Adventist message. By involving employees and students in these campaigns, the intention was also to prepare them to become evangelists in their respective churches and communities.

In 2000, the general minister of Foreign Affairs of Angola, together with the consul of that country, attended the Paraná Academy high school graduation. The ceremony took place in the Maringá’s city hall, in the presence of the city secretariat and the city councilors. The guests received a copy of the book O Terceiro Milênio (The Third Millennium). The representatives of the Angolan government publicly acknowledged that “the values passed on to the students are already influencing countries, thousands of kilometers from here.”

In 2002, the Speech Therapy program was added. The quality of this program was attested, for example, when in 2005, the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research team evaluated the Speech Therapy program and gave it the maximum available score. Hence, in 2001 Paraná Adventist College reached 190 enrollments in higher education.

In 2007, the Paraná Adventist College Administration program received the highest score on the National Assessment of Student Achievement (Exame Nacional de Desempenho do Estudantes, Enad) among the Adventist colleges in Brazil and ranked as second in the overall ranking of all colleges in the region of Maringá. In addition to these academic advances, the institution continued to promote the involvement of its students in missionary activities in the region. On April 4, 2007, students and employees took part in the blood donation campaign “Vida por vidas” (Life for Lives) in Maringá Blood Center. Since then, the initiative has been repeated and officially recognized by local authorities.

In February 2014, Paraná Adventist College began to host a regional campus of the Latin-American Adventist Theological Seminary, becoming the only Adventist theological educational center in the south region of Brazil. Thus, the bachelor’s course in theology is now also offered at Paraná Adventist College. In 2016, the Pedagogy program was offered. With this expansion, in December 2016, Paraná Adventist College reached a total of 1,048 students, from elementary (457) higher school (381), and undergraduate education (210). The first theology class graduated in December 2017.
The following years witnessed a rapid growth of undergraduate student enrollment. At the beginning of 2018, there were 616 enrollments. The Accounting program at the undergraduate level was opened that year. In the second semester of the same year, the Psychology program started. In 2018, a survey was carried out to improve the structure of the school library “Germano Ritter” and its literary collection. Since the establishment of the school on February 13, 2001, the library had occupied the top floor of the Higher Education building. The library, which in 2001 had 15,687 volumes, was increased to over 60,000 volumes and digital documents in 2018. In addition, the library gained its own building.\footnote{30}

Next to the library building, a Creationist Center was inaugurated, with the aim of providing the academic community with more knowledge about creationism and the biblical teachings in relation to creationism and evolutionism. The Center seeks to uphold the creationist belief of the institution and its collaborators, creating opportunities to witness to others about this belief. In 2019, the Center already had a collection of 564 volumes, 191 digital books, and 62 video titles.\footnote{31}

Paraná Adventist College is a multicultural environment. Besides students from many Brazilian states, there are also boarding students from different parts of the world, including the United States, Switzerland, and Africa. To better serve these people, the boarding school accepts teenagers as young as 13. This gives them the chance to enjoy, from an early age, the many advantages of Adventist education.\footnote{32}

**Historical Role of the School**

Paraná Adventist College and its predecessors have produces thousands of graduates over the years and many of them serve the Adventist work in the different parts of Brazil and the world.

The school has been actively serving the community around. Since 2009, for example, several projects have been developed, such as “Medicando e Confortando Corações” (Medicating and Comforting Hearts), in which all higher education programs are involved. Students are trained and qualified to handle human suffering, identify and respond to people’s needs (including spiritual ones), visit people, and help to address problematic situations. This program, which involves around 30 students, offers help to about 400 people every six months. Another similar project is the “Formação para Promoção de Saúde e Evangelismo” (Training for Health Promotion and Evangelism). This program has mobilized and trained people to promote the Adventist health lifestyle. This project has been operating since 2009 and has registered average annual participation of 150 students, who served around 1,200 people.\footnote{33}

Paraná Adventist College has always sought to fulfill its historical role as a missionary school. The school has participated in projects such as “Impacto Esperança” (Hope Impact),\footnote{34} which seeks to reach communities around the college with the biblical Adventist message of hope through the distribution of free Adventist books. Each year, through this and other integrated evangelistic actions, many people have been reached and transformed by the power of the gospel.\footnote{35}

The mission of Paraná Adventist College is to “promote the harmonious development of the students’ capacities for the full and conscious exercise of their social, professional and spiritual role so that their influence reaches eternity.”\footnote{36}

However, in order to continue fulfilling its mission, the institution faces some challenges. One is the need to have Adventist teachers for all academic programs. To reach this goal, Paraná Adventist College has invested in the qualification of teachers committed to the Adventist church. Another great need is the continual training of the school’s employees about the role of education in the process of salvation and expansion of the truth, allowing each school employee to contribute intentionally to the Adventist mission. With this objective, the school has sought to offer a course to expand the theological and denominational knowledge of its employees. Finally, the school continually seeks to find new effective ways to motivate students to serve the Church and use their knowledge in the service of the Adventist institutions.\footnote{37}

In its more than 80 years of existence under divine direction, the efforts of each faithful servant have contributed that Paraná Adventist College fulfills its mission to offer quality education, based on the biblical principles and the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education.

**List of Directors**\footnote{88}

Educandário Adventista de Butiá [Butia Adventist School] (1939-1949)

Waldemar Ehlers (1941); Emilio R. Azevedo (1942-1943); Romeu Ritter dos Reis (1944-1945); José D. Carvalho (1946).

Ginásio Adventista Paranaense [Paraná-Santa Catarina Academy] (1950-1963)

Romeu Ritter dos Reis (1947-1950); Enoch de Oliveira (1951); J.G. Streithorst (1952-1953); Dario Garcia (1954-1956); R.S. Ferreira (1957-1960); R.E. Oberg (1961).

Instituto Adventista Paranaense [Paraná Adventist College] (1964-present)

2008); Pedro Renato Frozza (2009-2010); Eliseu Prates dos Reis (2011-2012); Gilberto Damasceno da Silva (2013-present).39

**SOURCES**

“Autoridades de Angola participam de formatura no IAP” [Angolan authorities participate in IAP graduation]. *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], no. 4, year 96, April 2000.


Curitiba Antiga [Old Curitiba]. https://www.curitibaantiga.com/

“Curso de Administração do IAP” [IAP Administration Course]. *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], no. 1191, year 102, August 2007.

“Ex-diretor relembra o IAP” [Former director remembers the IAP]. *Revista Adventista* [Adventist Review], no. 11, year 86, November 1990.


**NOTES**

1. Adilson Pavan (IAP White Center director), e-mail message to Renato Gross, on December 15, 2016.?


3. Carolina Perez, “Instituto Adventista Paranaense comemora 75 anos de história” [Paraná Adventist College celebrates 75 years of history], Notícias


36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.


39. More information about the IAP can be found on the website [www.iap.org.br](http://www.iap.org.br) or on social media: Facebook: @instituto.paranaense, Twitter @portaliap, Instagram: @iap.oficial, and Youtube channel: Instituto Adventista Paranaense IAP [Paraná Adventist College IAP].

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