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Simon, Albertina Rodrigues da Silva (1896–1984)

THE BRAZILIAN WHITE CENTER – UNASP

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Albertina Rodrigues da Silva Simon was a public-school teacher, a translator, a reviewer, and the first Brazilian teacher at the Brazilian Adventist Seminary (UNASP-SP).

Early Life

Albertina Rodrigues da Silva Simon was born on June 24, 1896, in the city of São Paulo, Brazil.¹ She was the oldest daughter of João Rodrigues da Silva and Maria do Rosário Silva, who were born in Portugal and had emigrated to Brazil in 1894.² She had three sisters and a brother.³

Albertina was an avid reader since she was a child. Her school life began at age six in one of the São Paulo public schools.⁴ At age nine, she was enrolled at Externato de São José, a Catholic school, where she studied for almost six years (1906-1911).⁵ In 1912, she was accepted to pursue a teaching degree at the Caetano de Campos School in São Paulo, from which she graduated on November 23, 1916.⁶ She grew up under the religious influence of a Catholic family. Because of this, while studying at Externato de São José, she considered the possibility of becoming a nun.

Learning About the Adventist Church

Albertina learned about the Adventist message in 1915 when she attended a series of evangelistic meetings led by Pr. John Lipke in a tent set up near her house. Her biggest concern was whether something contrary to her beliefs would be said in those meetings. Before attending the first lecture, she prayed, "My Father in Heaven! You know that I am Your daughter! If it is not to Your pleasure that I attend this meeting, make me dislike it, and I will not go back again!" As a result, she became an assiduous attendee and missed no meetings. After studying with Bible Instructor Dona Corina and having a series of conversations with Pastor Lipke, Albertina learned about and acknowledged Adventist truths she could not reject. She started to attend a local church and, the following year, became the church Youth Director.⁷

At that point, since she believed that the Sabbath was the correct day to be observed according to the Bible, she could no longer work as a public-school teacher. She consulted Mrs. Corina, who consulted with others, and the church provided an opportunity for Albertina to work at the Brazilian Publishing House. She joined the denominational service on December 27, 1916, as an English translator and reviewer.⁸ A month later, on January 27, 1917, she was baptized by Pastor Suesmamm at the Brazilian Publishing House in Santo André, São Paulo.⁹

Denominational Work and Marriage

In 1918, a decree from the Brazilian government indicated that no college in the country could function without a native teacher to teach Portuguese, Geography, and Brazilian History. Therefore, Albertina was called to teach at the Brazilian Adventist Seminary (now UNASP-SP), where she also taught Mathematics and Physical Education.¹⁰ On January 15, 1920, Albertina married Bible Instructor Henrique Simon (1884-1974),¹¹ whom she had met at Pastor Lipke's conferences and who was studying at the Seminary at the time. Albertina and Henrique had the following children: Eunice (1920-2006),¹² Lóide (1923-2015),¹³ Enéias (1932-),¹⁴ Tércio (1937-),¹⁵ and Noé, who died during childhood.¹⁶

Albertina worked with her husband as a teacher at Porto Alegre Adventist School in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (1920-1922)¹⁷ and gave home lessons to students of the Santo André Adventist School, SP (1924-1925).¹⁸ At the end of 1925, she accepted the invitation to return to teach at the Adventist Seminary.¹⁹ To be closer to her husband, who was working as a pastor in a church in Itararé, São Paulo, the family returned to Santo André in 1929, where she gave private lessons and translated for the Brazilian Publishing House.²⁰ In 1931, she was again invited to teach at the Seminary. She returned to the institution in 1932,²¹ where she stayed as a Portuguese and Latin professor until the end of 1957, when she retired.²²

Retirement and Contribution

After her retirement, she continued to teach Latin reinforcement classes at the Brazil College from 1963-1965. She

also compiled excerpts from Brazilian authors for fifth-eighth grade auxiliary reading books in Adventist schools. She was a member and secretary of the Alvorada Adventist Church in São Paulo for many years.²³ She died on September 6, 1984, at the age of 88 in the city of São Paulo²⁴ and was buried in the Paz Cemetery.²⁵

Albertina was a remarkable figure of the SDA Church. She was the first Brazilian teacher for the Adventist Seminary, she taught at this institution for 35 years, and she taught the first generation of pastors who led the SDA Church in Brazil for a significant part of the 20th century. Throughout her life, Albertina Rodrigues da Silva Simon was also drawn to helping people who were in need of her assistance.²⁶

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NOTES

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5. Lessa, 30-31; Simon, 14-15.?
6. Vianna, 2; and Simon, 45.?
7. Simon, 25-28.; Vianna, 4-5; "Albertina Rodrigues Simon," *Revista Adventista*, October 1984, 30.?
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9. Lopes, 31; Simon, 10, 31, 50.?
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17. Simon, 64; C. E. Schofield, "Relatório da quinta sessão da Conferência União Brasileira," *Revista Adventista*, August 1920, 5; Albertina Rodrigues Simon, "Dedicação à Juventude," *Revista Mensal*, May 1921, 13.?
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19. Ibid., 65.?
20. Ibid., 67-70.?
21. Ibid., 71-72.?
22. Ibid., 84-85.?
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24. "Albertina Rodrigues Simon," 30.?
25. Simon, 97.?
26. "Albertina Rodrigues Simon," 30; Simon, 83.?

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