Pedro Saturno Camacho was an accountant, canvasser, and administrator from Brazil.

First Years

Pedro Saturno Camacho was born June 29, 1914, in the city of Pinheiro Machado, state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The son of Licínio Vital Camacho and Cândida dos Santos Camacho, he lived his childhood with eleven siblings on a small farm, where they grew grains and raised cattle and domestic animals.1

As a child, Pedro liked to play and was known for his mischief. He treasured riding horses with his friends and siblings. In one of these leisure moments, Pedro and his brother were out in the field learning how to throw a lasso at the herd when a heifer dragged him for about 200 meters (219 yards), scraping legs on the ground. His mother, fearful for his life, but the event resulted in only a single scar that he carried for the rest of his life.2

In 1926, when Camacho was 12 years old, his father died, leaving the family under his mother's responsibility. The following year the entire family moved to the city of Pelotas. Pedro worked in many activities to help with the family's subsistence, such as milk deliverer, shepherd, clerk, service provider for a lottery house, and a hotel butler and doorman.3

Knowing the value of studying, Camacho frequented the Municipal Library at night.4 Fortunately, he attended a local public school that offered high quality education. Later, he studied typing and continued to work, searching for ways to have a better life. One day he saw a job advertisement in the newspaper for an assistant at an American dentist's clinic. Camacho promptly applied for the job and was accepted.5

In 1934 Camacho became a salesman at a wholesale company, where he took care of the company’s accounting balance and delivered mail to clients. He acquired much knowledge in accounting, so, and soon became head of the office. In 1936, when Pedro was able to sustain the family financially, his mother became stricken with influenza and died.6

Camacho had a brother who served in the military and, soon after their mother’s death, was transferred to Pelotas. He arrived accompanied by his wife, Virginia, a Seventh-day Adventist with a missionary spirit. She began speaking with Pedro about the Adventist message.7 One day, she took him to a church service at Pelotas Adventist Church.
The preacher was Pastor John Boehm, the founder of Brazil College (present-day Brazil Adventist University (UNASP)). Siegfried Kümpel, then the senior pastor of the church, was also present. After that meeting, Pastor Kümpel began to study the Bible with Pedro.9

Camacho decided to become a Sabbath keeper, but still wavered in his commitment, as he was highly esteemed by his boss, who wanted him to become a joint owner of the company. Pastor Kümpel invited him to have Sabbath vespers and dinner at his house. He counseled him to leave his office job and take part in a canvassing program that was being held in the city of Taquara, at the local Adventist Academy. After taking heed of the pastor’s council, he participated in the canvassing program taught by Pastor Emílio Doehnert, then canvassing director for the South Brazil Union. He studied at Taquara Academy, current Cruzeiro do Sul Adventist Academy (IACS), in 1939, and, on November 25 of that same year, he was baptized by Pastor John Boehm in the Santa Maria River, in Taquara.8

Camacho entered the canvassing work on December 6, 1939, in the city of Cruz Alta, where he obtained great success, especially at the local military barracks. Thereafter he went to the city of Passo Fundo, where he also achieved a remarkable work. The first book that he worked with was Vencedor em Todas as Batalhas [Winner in All Battles], alongside with the magazine Vida e Saúde [Life and Health], which is still published today. That year he earned the value equivalent to the tuition fee for three full semesters. Accepting the invitation from Pastor Domingos Peixoto, he enrolled at Brazil College.10

There Camacho met Elvira Cól, the daughter of a construction employee. In their last year of school, Pedro and Elvira were engaged. They married March 10, 1942. The ceremony took place at the father-in-law’s house, Domingos Cól, who lived on a small farm behind campus. Pastor Domingos Peixoto da Silva presented the message.11 On December 11, 1942, two weeks after his graduation, the couple’s first daughter, Maria Guaraci Camacho, was born. Their second daughter, Gualcira Cândida Camacho, was born not long after.12

Life and Ministry (1942-1977)

In October 1942 Pedro Camacho received a letter from Pastor Germano Streithorst, president of the Rio Grande do Sul Conference, saying that he had been nominated as the field’s publications secretary. Camacho asked for guidance from God and from Pastor Domingos P. da Silva, Jerônimo G. Garcia, and Wilfort, who all encouraged him to accept the call. Thus, on December 16, 1942, the Camacho family moved to Rio Grande do Sul. Arriving there, he met the previous director, Henrique Rhue, who gave him the addresses of twelve students who worked for the conference. Pedro visited each one of them in the regions of Cruz Alta, Ijuí, and Santa Maria.13

Soon after the family had settled in Porto Alegre, Camacho began to work visiting and accompanying the twelve canvassers, as well as calling more people to spread the Adventist message. At Taquara Academy, he prepared the students of the Canvassing and Sales Techniques program to master the traits. In 1943 the Rio Grande do Sul students excelled in comparison to other regions.14

The students had a strong sense of mission and fulfilled the task with diligence. Among them were Atiliano Gonzalez and Domingos César da Silva, who canvassed among the coastal regions of São José do Norte to Osório, where there was no Adventist presence. They not only sold the book The Story of Jesus, but also offered Bible studies and prayed for their clients. Still today it is possible to find churches established due to the work of these canvassers.15

In 1944, at the São Paulo Adventist Church Biennial Assembly, Camacho was nominated as the publication director of the São Paulo Conference. Through Pastor Manoel Soares and Kümpel’s advice, Camacho accepted the call and moved with his family to São Paulo, where he supervised a department comprised of 31 canvassers. In a short period he doubled the number of literature evangelists. Under Camacho’s administration, the São Paulo Conference lead in sales of the union, of Brazil, and of the South American Division.16

Meanwhile, Camacho visited Hermínio Sarli and encouraged the family to send their son, Wilson, to study at Brazil College, talking to the director Domingos Peixoto about the matter. Wilson went to college and carried out the work of canvassing with great results. Later on, he was even called by the conference to become Pedro’s assistant. The Sarlis came to leave behind an important legacy for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.17

At the end of 1949, during the Quadrennial Assembly, Camacho was elected publications director for the South Brazil Union Conference (USB), which then comprised the states of São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul, Mato Grosso, and Goiás, and the region of Triângulo Mineiro, an area in the west of Minas Gerais state. There was much to do in this department, since the state of Mato Grosso did not have a Canvassing director and the large state of Goiás only had two canvassers. At time his dedicated work paid off, so Camacho nominated a director for Mato Grosso and another for Goiás.18 On January 24, 1953, Pedro Camacho was ordained into the pastoral ministry in São Paulo, in a ceremony officiated by Pastors Moisés Nigri, Walter Murray, Rodolfo Belz, and Walter Schubert.19
Pedro also desired to develop a door to door work, especially in large cities. He launched a project called *Serviço Educacional Lar e Saúde* [Home and Health Educational Service], and experimented in the district of Vila Clementino, in São Paulo city. From 7 to 9 p.m. he visited five houses, entering with great ease in them and selling materials in all of them. Thus the Brazilian Publishing House prepared the material so canvassers across the entire union could begin working by this method. At every work field, Pedro accompanied the conference director, as well as the canvassers, to show how to enter the people's homes with ease. Camacho’s method was made official practice in all of Brazil, and when Pastor Nicolás Chaij was publications director for the South American Division, he approved the system and introduced it throughout the division. The method is still used today.

In 1958, when Pedro was about to lead the first canvassing program in Florianópolis, state of Santa Catarina, he survived a plane crash in Itajaí. Since he suffered from injuries, he was taken to the Itajaí Hospital without too many complications. Even while under surveillance at the hospital, each morning Camacho took a taxi to the place where the program was being held, ministering to his colleagues until the afternoon. After his full recovery, Pedro continued his work at the union, serving there for nearly eighteen years. In 1966 he was called to lead the Publications Department of the South American Division.

That year he noticed that the canvassers weren’t taking full advantage of their talents. He developed a project called the *Mês Máximo* [Maximum Month], which consisted of a month of great motivation on sales, with prizes as encouragement for the canvassers that achieved the most. In 1967 he extended his administrative plan throughout the Division. Many canvassers increased their sales by a hundred percent or more. In all canvassing work fields, three methods of growing sales were used: *Serviço Educacional Lar e Saúde*, *Mês Máximo*, and Canvassing Assistants.

During his time at the South American Division, Pedro received a copy of the book *The Great Controversy* in Spanish. He spoke to division president Roger Wilcox about publishing it in large scale for an accessible price. His request was accepted, and the book was introduced to canvassing in the South American Division’s territory, with great help from the Brazil Publishing House. The aim was to sell one million books in the Division’s territory. In 1987 1.45 million copies were sold in Brazil alone.

Camacho proposed to the South American Spanish Publishing House (ACES) to publish copies of *The Great Controversy* for canvassing sales. At first there was fear of persecution from the Catholic Church, especially in Argentina, where Catholicism was highly influential. Initially the suggestion was to publish the book in abridged form, with up to sixteen chapters removed. However, Camacho was against the idea and, after two years, the full book was published alongside another book about health. Through canvassing, many Spanish-speaking people were converted to the Adventist faith by reading *The Great Controversy*.

In 1976 Camacho went to work as a sales promoter at the Brazil Publishing House (CPB). For fifteen years he promoted canvassing books and magazines. His job was to prepare advertisements, prospectuses, offers, and open space for canvassing at Catholic schools, churches, and seminars. To better organize that sector, he separated groups which dealt with magazines in all the work fields. The first magazine group was organized in São Paulo, the second in Campinas, and soon after, the system was implemented in other places.

After the translation of *The Bible Story* by Arthur Maxwell into Portuguese, Camacho participated alongside other pastors in the books’ launch, and visited civil and ecclesiastical authorities to present the series. Camacho also performed important work in public relations at Brazil Publishing House. He visited preeminent pastors from other denominations and many Catholic cardinals. Together with Pastor Vilmar Hirle, from Rio de Janeiro, many schools opened their spaces for the canvassers, including some with more than 20,000 students, resulting in thousands of magazine subscriptions.

**Last Years**

Camacho retired in 1978 but continued acting as a promoter, counselor, and public relations leader, representing Brazil Publishing House at canvassing programs, bringing technique, knowledge, and motivation to young canvassers. On August 24, 1987, Pedro Camacho was honored by the South Brazil Union for his more than 40 years of service. The union established the Pedro Camacho Medal, honoring every canvasser who retired in that region.

Camacho finished his canvassing work in the city of Satulina, state of Rio de Janeiro, on December 26, 1992, when he was already an honorary minister of the Central Brazil Union Conference. On this occasion, he gave a training program to 65 students of Petropolis Adventist Academy (IPAE). Almost everyone present was able to meet the financial goals they had set.

Pedro Camacho died May 11, 2002, at 88 years old, in the city of São Paulo, leaving behind his wife Elvira, who died in 2015, age 91 years; his two daughters, five grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Camacho was buried at the Congonhas Cemetery, in São Paulo.

**Contribution**

Pedro Saturno Camacho is recognized by the Seventh-day Adventist church in South America for his efforts in the advancement of the Adventist message through publications. The projects and methods he instituted proved very effective for the canvassing work. Pedro accomplished great results as he led the publishing department at the Rio
Grande do Sul Conference, having held the same positions at the São Paulo Conference, the South Brazil Conference, and at the South American Division. He was known for being an enthusiastic leader of young people.

SOURCES

Pedro Saturno Camacho biography. Monography, Instituto Adventista de Ensino, Engenheiro Coelho, SP.

“Elvira Col Camacho.” Revista Adventista, August 2015.


NOTES


2. Ibid., 173-174.

3. Ibid., 174; and Pedro Saturno Camacho biography. Monography, Instituto Adventista de Ensino, Engenheiro Coelho, SP, 2.


5. Ibid.

6. Pedro Saturno Camacho biography, 4-5.


8. Pedro Saturno Camacho biography, 5; and Timm, 176.


10. Pedro Saturno Camacho biography, 8.

11. Ibid., 9.


22. Ibid., 14-17.

23.
24. Pedro Saturno Camacho biography, 18.
25. Ibid., 19-20.
26. Ibid., 20.
29. Ibid., 20-21.
30. Ibid., 22-23.
31. Ibid., 22-23.