



Paulus Simon Seidl and family.

Photo courtesy of the National Adventist Memory Center Archive in Brazil.

Seidl, Paulus Simon (1911–1997)

THE BRAZILIAN WHITE CENTER – UNASP

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Paulus Simon Seidl was a pastor and nurse in Brazil.

Paulus Simon Seidl was born on January 19, 1911 in the city of Düsseldorf, state of Westphalia, Germany. He was the son of Simon Petrus Seidl (1880-1957) and Johanna Szemlewski (1889-1950), and had as siblings Paula, Lidia and Siegfried Seidl.¹

Paulus was born under the rumors of World War I. His parents left Germany in 1913, in the midst of religious conflicts between their own family members, arising when his father embraced the Adventist faith. At two years of age, Paulus set sail on a long journey with his parents to the state of Espírito Santo, Brazil, where he completed elementary education at the Adventist school in the city of Serra Pelada.

In 1931, he moved to the city of São Paulo where he completed a Theology degree at Brazil College (now UNASP-SP). While a student there, he got acquainted with Pastor Leo Halliwell's medical-missionary work with speedboats in the Amazon River and was impressed to pursue the medical area. On seeing that such a course was not offered at Brazil College, he decided to study Nursing in Argentina, graduating around 1937 at the current River Plate Adventist University.²

On February 2, 1938 Paulus married Alicia Victoria Weiss (1917-1986), who was the granddaughter of José Weiss, one of the first Adventists in South America.³ From this relationship were born Amilton Paulus Seidl, Haroldo Julius Seidl (1943-2003) and Ruth Amalia Seidl (1951-1982). Alicia was born in Crespo, Argentina, and while single she taught at the primary school located in front of the first Adventist church in South America. She also graduated from the Nursing program at River Plate Adventist University, where the couple had met as students. She served as a missionary nurse by the side of her husband in the São Francisco River for over 10 years and canvassed by bicycle and horse throughout the Brazilian Northeast.⁴

After graduating from the Nursing program, still in Argentina, Paulus was called to begin his ministry at the Bahia Mission, which comprised the Bahia and Sergipe states of Brazil. He worked there as an evangelist from 1938 to 1943,⁵ and was the only pastor in Sergipe for three years. In Bahia he was also one of the few workers and traveled throughout the whole state by horse to attend the church's needs and hold evangelistic meetings. He was responsible for introducing the Adventist message in many cities. In addition, due to this lack of pastors, he took care of almost the entire Mission's departments. Over this period, he suffered persecution while preaching in Ilhéus, Bahia, for religious and ethnical reasons. On almost being beaten up by a riot, he went for

the police's help, but happened to be put in prison in Salvador for three months, missing the birth of his second son.⁶

On March 6, 1943, Seidl was ordained to the ministry in Rio de Janeiro.⁷ After returning from furlough in Argentina, he directly contributed to the founding of the São Francisco River Mission, in 1945, aimed to help the riverside population of the region of Bahia and Minas Gerais states. The project was made official the following year, with the construction of the speedboat *Luminar*.⁸ The launch was constructed by hand by Pastor Paulus himself. In the period of over 10 years of medical and pastoral assistance to the riparian, around 46,000 people were helped by Paulus and Alicia. Their house was located in the city of Pirapora, state of Minas Gerais, where they also organized a church.⁹

As a way of demonstrating the appreciation held for Pastor Seidl's work, he received a document from the National Malaria Department that nominated him as an officer of this state department. The document gave him permission to travel by train and airplane for free whenever necessary, in order to attend the interests of his medical ministry.¹⁰ Paulus was president of the São Francisco Mission from 1949 until 1954.¹¹ Afterwards, he was appointed as president of the Goiano-Mineira Mission, serving there from 1955 to 1958.¹²

In 1959, he was named president of the Central Argentine Conference, where he worked until 1965.¹³ Having returned to Brazil in 1966, he undertook the presidency of the North Brazil Union until 1968.¹⁴ The following year, he was elected president of the Espírito Santo Conference, serving there up to the year of 1971.¹⁵ Between 1972 and 1973, he was the president of the former East Brazil Conference.¹⁶ He served as an ordained minister in this field up to his retirement in 1976.¹⁷ After this he returned to the state of Espírito Santo, where he assisted the district of Afonso Cláudio and stayed active by accepting invitations to preach in weeks of prayer throughout the whole state.¹⁸

Pastor Paulus Seidl passed away on April 19, 1997. The funeral took place in Ribeirão, state of Espírito Santo, where he was buried alongside his family.¹⁹ Paulus dedicated 58 years of his life to the pastoral and medical ministry and, as such, rendered a relevant contribution to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A pioneer of the São Francisco Mission, he helped thousands of people from the humble riverside population, many of which were baptized.²⁰ Among his work, he had the misfortune of losing his daughter at the early age of 30, victim of consequences of cerebral malaria that was caught as a baby in the mission field. Even after this probation, the Seidls continued to serve with great enthusiasm.

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NOTES

1. Norma Ligia Seidl, interview by Rogel Maio Nogueira Tavares Filho, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, February 26, 2019.
2. Ibid.
3. "Alicia Victoria Weiss de Seidl," *Revista Adventista*, year 82, no. 06, June, 1986, 29.
4. Norma Ligia Seidl, interview by Rogel Maio Nogueira Tavares Filho, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, February 26, 2019.
5. "Bahia Mission," *Seventh-Day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1939), 217; and "Bahia Mission," *Seventh-Day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1944), 231.
6. Norma Ligia Seidl, interview by Rogel Maio Nogueira Tavares Filho, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, February 26, 2019.
7. Certificate of Ordination of Paulus Simon Seidl (Archive of the National Adventist Memory Center/Ellen G. White Research Center: UNASP-EC, Engenheiro Coelho, SP).
8. Ana Paula Ramos, *Desafio nas Águas: Um regaste da história das Lanchas médico-missionárias da Amazônia* (Tatuí, SP: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2009), 69.
9. Norma Ligia Seidl, interview by Rogel Maio Nogueira Tavares Filho, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, February 26, 2019.
10. L. Replogle, "A Obra Médica no Rio S. Francisco," *Revista Adventista*, year 42, no. 07, July, 1947, 12.
11. "Rio de Janeiro Sanitarium and Hospital," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1949), 307; "Rio de Janeiro Sanitarium and Hospital," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1951), 300; "Rio São Francisco Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1950), 16; "Rio São Francisco Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1955), 144.
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 16. "East Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1973-1974), 229.
 17. "East Brazil Union Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978), 260.
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 19. Ibid.
 20. Ibid.
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