

Souza, Jonas Monteiro de (1916–2004)

THE BRAZILIAN WHITE CENTER – UNASP

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Jonas Monteiro de Souza, teacher, composer and conductor, was born on February 24, 1916, in the city of Santana, Bahia, near the border of the state of Minas Gerais. His father, João Monteiro de Souza (1888-1960) was born in Alegre, Bahia and his mother Sebastiana D'Oliveira Silva (1893-1982) was born in Macaúbas, Bahia. Both passed away in the city of Lavinia, São Paulo State. Jonas had five siblings, Alice de Oliveira e Souza, Ezequias Monteiro de Souza, Hercília de Oliveira e Souza, Jemima Monteiro de Souza and Oldina de Oliveira e Souza. Born into an Adventist home, he received Bible studies from Pastor Paulo Seidl, who baptized him in Santana, his hometown.¹

At the age of 18, with limited financial resources, he migrated to São Paulo to study at the Brazil College (now Brazil Adventist University [Central Adventist University of Sao Paulo]). At first, he wasn't sure about staying at Brazil College, but after a few days the institution granted him a scholarship.² In 1938 he began the theology course, completing it in 1940 (at that time the course lasted only two years). However, he didn't choose a ministerial career, but instead devoted himself to teaching.³

He married Eunice Simon (1920-2006) on December 11, 1940, in the city of Sao Paulo. She was from Rio Grande do Sul, born in Porto Alegre, capital of the state. The couple had four boys and one girl: Enio, Vania, Élcio (July 27, 1948 – November 30, 1979), Lélío, and Névio. Eunice was a teacher too.⁴

In 1940, Jonas joined the faculty at the Adventist Theological Institute, (now Petropolis Adventist Academy), located in the city of Petropolis, Rio de Janeiro. There he taught history, geography, chemistry, language, and Latin. Simultaneously, he worked as conductor of the choir until 1946. In 1950, he started a second-degree

course, Classic Letters, at the University of Brazil, now referred to as Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). In 1951, along with his wife, he returned to teach at the Adventist Theological Institute, working in this capacity until 1953.⁵

In 1957 he moved to the city of Volta Redonda, where he worked as director of the Getulio Vargas municipal school, and later founded his own school, the 17th of July Gymnasium. In this city, he helped found two Adventist churches. He also assisted in the construction of another church in the city of Lavinia, São Paulo State. Between 1979 and 1980 he was a teacher at São Paulo Academy, (now called Brazil Adventist University Academy-Hortolandia).⁶

Self-taught in music, Jonas was a choir conductor at the Adventist churches of Madureira, Méier and Volta Redonda, both located in Rio de Janeiro. In addition, he composed several songs, including a children's song called "The Flood," and two hymns in the Brazilian Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, "The Voice of Jesus", number 90, and "Childhood Recall", number 451. (The first one has been translated into Spanish with the title "La Voz de Jesús," and is hymn number 309 in the Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal)⁷

He passed away on August 24, 2004, at the age of 88, in the city of Volta Redonda, Rio de Janeiro State.⁸ He left an important legacy in both the educational and music areas of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Due to his influence and work, churches were founded in the states of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. Enio Monteiro, to Ryan Medeiros, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, May 17, 2019.

2. Geraldo R. Marski, *Quando Tudo dá Certo* (Tatuí, SP: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2002), 112.

3. Renato Stencel; William Edward Timm, "História da Faculdade Adventista de Teologia no Brasil," ACADEMIA. Accessed on May 5, 2019, https://www.academia.edu/8523969/Breve_Hist%C3%B3rico_do_SALT_-_Brasil_Sul; and Enio Monteiro, to Ryan Medeiros, Engenheiro Coelho, Sao Paulo, May 17, 2019.
4. Enio Monteiro, to Ryan Medeiros, Engenheiro Coelho, Sao Paulo, May 17, 2019.
5. Ibid.; "East Brazil Academy," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1941), 265; "East Brazil Academy," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1947), 237; Brown, Walton J., "O Segundo Ano Escolar do I.T.A.," *Revista Adventista*, August, 1941, 10; Brown, Walton J., "Os Missionários do ITA," *Revista Adventista*, February, 1942, 10.
6. Enio Monteiro, to Ryan Medeiros, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, May 17, 2019; and "São Paulo Academy," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 397.
7. Enio Monteiro, to Ryan Medeiros, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, May 17, 2019; Rubens S. Lessa, ed., *Hinário Adventista do Sétimo Dia* (Tatuí, SP: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 1996); and Carlos A. Steger, ed., *Himnario Adventista* (Florida Oeste, AR-B: Asociación Casa Editora Sudamericana, 2009).
8. Enio Monteiro, to Ryan Medeiros, Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, May 17, 2019.

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