Ellen G. White Study Center of Parana Adventist College (Brazil)

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The Ellen G. White Study Center of Parana Adventist College is a certified center dedicated to studying the Ellen G. White’s literary legacy and the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the south of Brazil. The institution is located in the mission field of the South Brazil Union Conference (USB), and it is overseen by Ellen G. White Estate Incorporated and by the Spirit of Prophecy Department of the South American Division. The Study Center operates in the Parana Adventist College (IAP), located on Rodovia PR-317 (Maringá-Campo Mourão), Km 119-Glebe Paiçandu, Lot 80, Zip Code 87130-000, Countryside, in the city of Ivatuba, in the state of Paraná, Brazil.

The Study Center has the purpose of strengthening the local Adventist congregations and the educational units administered by the South Brazil Union Conference through promoting the study, dissemination, and conservation of
the literary heritage of the writer and prophetess Ellen G. White. The center also supports 38 White minicenters at the USB mission field. In addition, the Research Center is dedicated, as much as possible, to catalog and disseminate the history of the SDA organization in the south region of Brazil. Like the other Ellen G. White Study Centers in Brazil, the IAP Study Center is supported by Brazil Ellen G. White Research Center, headquartered at the Brazil Adventist University, Engenheiro Coelho campus (UNASP-EC).

Background

The state of Paraná, where the Study Center is located, is part of the south region of the country. The settling of this region, the economic advance of the state, as well as the progress of the Adventist work was stimulated by the construction of the Railroad São Paulo-Paraná. It was through the emigration by trains that the first Adventists, that came from the countryside of São Paulo, arrived in the state of Paraná. The Adventist education in that region started at the end of the 19th century, when the Curitiba School was established (presently Colégio Curtibano Adventista do Bom Retiro [Bom Retiro Adventist Academy]).

Other advances came in this area, and other Adventist schools were founded in the south of Brazil. In 1935 a school was established in the municipality of Benedito Novo, in the state of Santa Catarina, in the south border with Paraná. This institution took the same name of the city where it was based (Colégio Benedito Novo [Benedito Novo School]). This school offered elementary education for students. However, over time, due to some difficulties, Colégio Benedito Novo (Benedito Novo School) had to stop its operation.

Concerning this, plans were soon made to create a new Adventist educational institution in the region. The Colaço and Stingelim Linhares families decided to donate to the church a piece of land located in the state of Paraná, near the border with Santa Catarina, in the city of Lapa, in the Butiá dos Colaços district. In this location, in 1939, a school known as Educandário Adventista de Butiá (Butiá Adventist School) (EAB) was founded. However, the EAB often suffered from flooding on the roads that were caused by the overflow of the Negro River. This made the access to the school very difficult. For this reason the school administration, considering that the buildings were made of wood, decided to disassemble the school and transport it by train to the city of Curitiba, in the state of Paraná, in November 1947. In 1950 this school started to operate under a new name: Parana-Santa Catarina Academy. Later, in 1964, as the school would grow and new courses were added to its curriculum, it became known as Paraná Academy.

The place where the IAP is located today, 25 km away from the city of Maringá, was purchased on November 8, 1973. The address change was due to the expropriation of the property where it operated in the capital of the state, for the construction of the industrial city of Curitiba. The cornerstone of the IAP was launched on August 12, 1974, at the institution’s present address, on Highway PR-317, Km 119–Glebe Paicându, Lot 80, in the city of Ibatuba, state of Paraná. Some time after that last change, the idea of installing a White minicenter in the institution came up, and soon the first plans were made to put this idea into practice. The goal of this minicenter was that it would assist the South Region of the country regarding the access and dissemination of books and other materials written by Ellen G. White.

The author’s materials add up to more than five thousand articles and forty-nine books written throughout her life. The addressed themes are: Bible, family, education, publications, health, evangelism, among others. She received help from literary assistants who reviewed the grammar and spelling of handwritten texts, which were later typed and, if approved, they would be signed by her authorizing publication. With the death of Ellen G. White on July 16, 1915, the custody of such original documents was entrusted to the Ellen G. White Estate. Since then this institution has been the only one authorized to compile, translate, print, and authorize the publication of contents from Ellen White’s literary heritage.

With the purpose of strengthening the Adventist members around the world, the White Estate encouraged the inauguration of local offices, called Ellen G. White Research Centers. Now there are 21 Research Centers of this level operating among the 13 Seventh-day Adventist Divisions, and they operate directly connected with the White Estate. Brazil was the tenth country to be authorized to create a Research Center outside the U.S.A. The Brazil Ellen G. White Research Center was then founded. This Research Center was inaugurated on December 6, 1987, in the Brazil College (presently UNASP-EC). Later, the small centers were installed, and the Ellen G. White Study Centers were created in Brazil (such as the IAP Study Center).

Foundation

The IAP, where the Study Center is located, inaugurated Higher Education in 2001 and, in 2004, a space within the college’s library was dedicated to the operation of the Ellen G. White mini-center. From that moment on, the institution began to purchase the necessary archives to organize and obtain recognition as a Study Center. The responsible persons for this project were the then IAP general director and the treasurer. Shortly after, with the furniture and all the Ellen G. White books needed for certification, the IAP White mini-center was inaugurated on October 21, 2004. At that time, the archive had 437 books.

The purpose of the mini-center was to offer a more detailed knowledge about the church’s history, as well as the writings of Ellen G. White. Since the inauguration of the institution, everyone can have access to such contents and its sources, including the academic community and local church members. The idea is that everyone can deepen their biblical and prophetic knowledge in order to assist in the growth and advancement of the church’s missionary work.
work. The IAP White mini-center started its work being classified as level one. In general, the mini-centers can be classified into three levels. To reach level one it is necessary to dispose of a literary archive with all Ellen White’s books already published, including books that are thematic compilations, original books and devotional, as well as books written by other authors that are considered relevant in the context of Adventist studies. The levels two and three add even more bibliographies of this nature.

**History**

Some time after the inauguration, combined with the growing number of people interested in visiting the mini-center, the place also received more and more volumes of Ellen G. White’s works. The investments made enabled that, on February 26, 2006, the IAP mini-center could be classified as level three. When this certificate was received, the archive had already a total of 876 volumes including books, CDs, DVDs, magazines, and other documents. The mini-center location was reinaugurated later, on November 23, 2013. This happened when the institution went through a status change, becoming known as “Ellen G. White Study Center of the IAP.”

The classification as an Ellen G. White Study Center is based on different criteria in relation to the requirements for the opening of the Research Centers or mini-centers. The processes, evaluations, and approval of the establishment of a Study Center in the Brazilian territory are defined by *Ellen G. White Estate Incorporated* in the United States and by the Brazil Ellen G. White Research Center. In addition to the materials available in a mini-center, the Study Center also provides most of the ‘essential historical materials originally available only in a Research Center.’ Thus, the main differences between a Research Center and a Study Center are that the last one does not include Ellen G. White unpublished manuscripts, and all the funds for its maintenance are the responsibility of the institution itself.

Due to the implementation of the Faculty of Theology at the IAP, in 2014 the mini-center had to meet beyond the expectations of a level three certificate, the academic research directed to the Adventist theology area. It was then that new investments were made, new books were imported, and the place received a donation of documents and publications from the South American Division. In addition to the renovated archive, new furniture was custom built. “The number of about eighteen thousand pages of the *Ellen G. White Estate Directory File* was printed, which were cataloged and archived physically. Finally a digital file was created with these documents, totaling 5,684 documents, accessible by the IAP’s intranet network.”

Later, on August 9, 2016, the new IAP library building was inaugurated and, since that year, the Study Center has been operating in that location, with a more prepared environment that includes new furniture and equipment. And the improvements continued. The Study Center went through other structural changes in the beginning of 2017. New bookshelves were purchased, making it possible to reorganize the archive in the IAP library. Part of the materials were relocated in order to keep them preserved, facilitating the understanding and the proper use by the students.

Since its foundation the Study Center has received annual technical visits from the IAP’s elementary school students. These visits include an exposition and explanation of the institution’s functioning and purpose. In order to encourage visits and researches in the Study Center, special lectures and programs are held in Adventist churches throughout the surrounding region. The IAP Study Center also carries out several activities related to evangelization such as the promotion of the Bible Reading Plan, combined with the reading of the Spirit of Prophecy books; collaboration in the Patriarchs and Prophets Book Contest, that is done at the IAP; and the promotion and participation in the project “Eu conheço a minha história” (I know my History), making available several materials that help participants to learn more about the SDA history.

The present archive has 2,610 volumes of books, in addition to hundreds of CDs, DVDs, magazines, compiled articles, photographs, and other documents. When there are events related to the Spirit of Prophecy and the Adventist history, the Study Center borrows historical documents and provides assistance to churches in the region. The institution also promotes Bible exhibitions in various versions and languages during the Bible Week, which is part of the IAP’s school calendar.

**Perspective**

Since its foundation, all activities done by the Study Center have helped to preserve the Adventist values and commitments to the truth revealed by God and thus have collaborated with the fulfillment of the SDA mission in its sphere. Steadfast in this purpose, the institution’s goal is to continue stimulating reading and researching in the Ellen G. White’s writings as a contribution so that more people have access to biblical truths and may be reached by the message of salvation. In addition, the center also aims to continue helping to preserve the history of Adventism as a way of supporting the preservation of its identity and mission.

For this purpose, the Study Center will continue to collect historical, institutional, and important documents for the local church, as well as preserving the objects and documents that today already exist in the archives. Among the main future goals to improve even more its performance are: define the dissemination methods, use and borrowing of the archive to the local Adventist community; create a space on the IAP’s library Web site to promote the Study Center; provide more visibility of relevant information to the center and; provide online access to digital documents that can be inserted on the Web site with the appropriate permission to download.
Lists

Official names
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Directors

Sources


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Notes

1. Julio Cesar Ribeiro (Brazil Ellen G. White Research Center assistant), e-mail message to the author, December 9, 2019.


