

Bogdanow, Leonid

(1927–2003)

THE BRAZILIAN WHITE CENTER – UNASP

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Leonid Bogdanow, 1982

Photo courtesy of Brazilian White Center - UNASP.

Leonid Bogdanow was a canvasser, pastor, and conference-level director in the South Brazil Union.

Leonid Bogdanow was born on March 20, 1927, in the countryside of Pinsk, which currently belongs to Belarus. His father was Nikifor Bogdanow (1890–1893), born in Ukraine, and his mother was Nadzieja Bogdanow (1900–1978), born in Belarus. His siblings were Tacijana Bogdanow Liepiesiewitz; Mikolaj Bogdanow, who studied theology at the Brazil College (now referred as UNASP-SP) but did not enter the pastoral ministry; Stanislaw Bogdanow, who also studied theology at the Brazil College and served as a minister for many years; and Olga Bogdanow, the youngest, the only one who was born in Brazil.

In 1929, Leonid's family decided to sell the few lands they owned in Belarus and immigrate to Brazil because of the communist regime that was expanding from Russia to all the Slavic countries, bringing up terror and hunger.

While leaving Europe en route to Brazil, Leonid got a New Testament in Russian as a present from his cousin, which he kept for a long time without reading it. When Bogdanow's family arrived in Brazil, they were taken to the state of Rio Grande do Sul, a place in the interior of the state in the region of the city of Frederico Westphalen. In this place was a colony of Slavic immigrants for which the Brazilian government had a settlement concession program.

Leonid Bogdanow attended elementary school in the countryside of the city of Frederico Westphalen. He attended a camp meeting in the city of Taquara, also located in Rio Grande do Sul. After that, he managed to get sources to travel to the Cruzeiro do Sul Adventist Academy, where he attended the gymnasium.

When Leonid was 15, his father started to become dissatisfied with his family's lack of religiosity, so he began to spend minutes after work studying that New Testament in Russian that had been given to them as a present when they left Europe and that had never been read. On the first day, they read Matthew 24, which made them interested in continuing to read, so they tried to get a complete Bible. Another Russian immigrant who was living in the area knew a person in the city of Porto Alegre, the capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, who could get a complete Bible. Weeks later, the family received at home a complete Bible in Russian through the mail.

Because of the Bible study, all the Bogdanow family started keeping the Sabbath and adopted new eating habits. It was then that a local told them that there was a group of people who were also keeping the sabbath 60 kilometers (37 miles) away from the place they used to live. Leonid and his brother Mikolaj went to find these people by horse. Those people were Seventh-day Adventists, and they got in touch with the conference office in Porto Alegre. The conference sent Pastor Germano Streithorst to visit the Bogdanow family in the countryside area. Pastor Streithorst spent an entire week with them, giving Bible studies and teaching hymns, and at the end of the evangelization week, in the year of 1942, he baptized 12 people from the Bogdanow family in the Braga River, in the city of Francisco Westphalen.

Leonid went to high school at the Brazil College (now referred to as Brazil Adventist University—Campus SP), financing his education by the canvassing work. He continued in the same institution to study theology and graduated in 1956. Before graduating, he was called by Pastor Silas Gianini to begin his ministry in the Minas Mission.

Also in 1956, Leonid married Edith Elfried Wiedenhof, who was born in the city of Ijuí, Rio Grande do Sul, on August 25, 1934. The couple met each other at the Brazil College and started dating when she was working as an editorial assistant at the Brazilian Publishing House. Edith always supported the pastoral ministry of her husband, serving the Seventh-day Adventist Church in several denominational institutions, such as conferences and Adventist schools, in positions such as secretary, teacher, and educational advisor. As a result of their marriage, they had three children: Elny Bogdanow, Elsie Bogdanow, and Elmer Wiedenhof Bogdanow!¹

Pastor Bogdanow started working in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Minas Mission in 1957²; and after that, in the first year of his ministry, he helped pastor Enoch de Oliveira working in a series of meetings in the

city of Belo Horizonte in the state of Minas Gerais.³

From 1958 to 1960, Leonid Bogdanow worked as a district pastor in the city of Lavras, Minas Gerais. When he arrived, there were no baptized Adventists; when he left, more than a hundred baptized members met in a church building (currently the central church of Lavras) that was constructed while he was there. In 1961, Leonid was the district pastor of the church of Concordia (which was also built during his ministry), in the city of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, from which he was farewelled the day of its inauguration.

Pastor Leonid Bogdanow was ordained to the ministry in August 1961, and in 1962, he returned to live in Rio Grande do Sul to work as a district pastor in Porto Alegre. Leonid served as director of the Educational and Youth departments in the Rio Grande do Sul Conference during the years of 1963 and 1964. After that, he became the director of the Cruzeiro do Sul Adventist Academy, the institution where he had studied when he was younger, in the city of Taquara, Rio Grande do Sul, from 1965 to 1966. In 1966, he started to study pedagogy at Bagé College in Rio Grande do Sul.⁴ In 1967, Leonid Bogdanow returned to the Rio Grande do Sul Conference headquarters to lead the Sabbath School and Lay Activities departments.⁵

In 1968, Leonid returned as a district pastor, working in the central church of the city of Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul. He was then transferred to the central church of the city of Londrina, in the state of Paraná, where he worked from 1969 to 1970.⁶ In December of 1969, he graduated with a degree in pedagogy from Bagé Academy in Rio Grande do Sul.⁷

Afterward, in 1971, Leonid served in the Parana Conference as a leader of the Stewardship and Patrimonial Expansion departments,⁸ and after that, he worked in the department of Education during 1972 and 1973.⁹ Subsequently, from 1974 to 1979, Leonid occupied the post of secretary in the Parana Conference. And in 1980, still in Parana, Leonid returned to work as a district pastor at the Santa Quiteria church in the city of Curitiba.

In 1981, Pastor Bogdanow was transferred to South Mato Grosso Mission, where he worked as the president of the mission until 1985. Then, in 1986 he went to Curitiba, the capital of Paraná, to work to the South Brazil Union Conference, leading the ADRA, Spirit of Prophecy, and Denominational Literature ministries departments, after which he retired.

Pastor Leonid loved traveling, and after his retirement, he led many groups on trips all over Brazil and the world. He founded, along with his youngest son, Elmer, the Adventour Travel and Tourism travel agency, which was still operating in 2019. Leonid never stopped preaching and encouraging evangelistic series until his death, in May 2003,¹⁰ from cancer. He was buried in the city of Curitiba, Paraná.

Leonid Bogdanow was a successful canvasser. He used his management skills to build churches and schools where he ministered. Hundreds of people were converted and baptized as a direct result of evangelistic meetings led by him.¹¹

SOURCES

"Leonid Bogdanow obituary." *Revista Adventista*, August 2003. <http://acervo.revistaadventista.com.br/capas.cpb>.
Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958 and 1973.

NOTES

1. Elmer Wiedenhoft Bogdanow and Edith Wiedenhoft Bogdanow, e-mail message to Vinicios Fernandes Alencar, May 17, 2018.
2. "Minas Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1958), 150.
3. Bogdanow and Bogdanow, e-mail message.
4. Edith Bogdanow, phone call to Adriane Ferrari Silva, Engenheiro Coelho, Sao Paulo, October 10, 2018.
5. Bogdanow and Bogdanow, e-mail message.
6. Ibid.
7. Bogdanow, phone call.
8. Bogdanow and Bogdanow, e-mail.
9. "Parana Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1973), 237.
10. "Leonid Bogdanow obituary," *Revista Adventista*, August 2003, 36.
11. Bogdanow and Bogdanow, e-mail.

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