

Fonseca, Claudomiro Franco da (1918-2013)

THE BRAZILIAN WHITE CENTER – UNASP (2)

The Brazilian White Center – UNASP (2) is a team of teachers and students at the Brazilian Ellen G. White Research Center – UNASP at the Brazilian Adventist University, Campus Engenheiro, Coelho, SP. The team was supervised by Drs. Adolfo Semo Suárez, Renato Stencel, and Carlos Flávio Teixeira. The following are the team members: Melissa Querido Batista, Priscila Carvalho dos Santos, Allan Sleyter Soares de Atayde, Jonatan Ferreira Nascimento, and Leo Eduardo Menegusso Valenzi.

Claudomiro Franco da Fonseca was an Adventist pastor, chaplain, church administrator, and humanitarian in Brazil for nearly 40 years.

Early Years and Marriage

Claudomiro Franco da Fonseca, son of Silvestre Fialho da Fonseca and Izaura Franco da Fonseca, was born on May 2, 1918, in the city of Belém, Pará state, in the northern region of Brazil. His brother was Álvaro Franco da Fonseca. Claudomiro lived his childhood in the Cidade Velha neighborhood, in the Guajará Bay, in Belém. His father worked at the Brazilian Navy arsenal and chose to live in this neighborhood to be close to his workplace.¹ As an adult, on December 23, 1943,² Claudemiro Fonseca married Esmeralda Vasconcelos, with whom he had one daughter and two sons: Ligia, Cláudio and Clóvis.³

Conversion

Claudomiro was not born into a religious family--however, in his childhood, he once dreamed that Jesus visited his house and spoke with his mother. This dream left a strong spiritual impression that marked him for the rest of his life.⁴ His family's experience changed in his adolescence when they came to know the Adventist message.



Claudomiro Franco da Fonseca

Photo courtesy of Brazilian White Center-UNASP.

His father was invited by two women to watch an evangelistic program that would take place in the city's amphitheater. Mr. Silvestre was interested in spiritual topics. Therefore, he readily accepted the invitation and with fervor went to watch the evangelistic program given by Pastor [Leo Halliwell](#).⁵

Silvestre was captivated by the program led by Pastor Halliwell, and invited Claudomiro, who initially hesitated, but then accepted, and together with his father he watched the last meetings that were taking place at the Cine Éden, in Belém.⁶ Despite the prejudice that existed against Protestants at that time, given that Catholicism was the predominant religion, every night the auditorium (which held 300 people) was packed.⁷ Halliwell's charisma and the excellence of the Bible worker Manoel Pereira da Silva moved Claudomiro and his father. Soon they were visited by Manoel, who led them in Bible studies. Claudomiro was baptized in 1936 in Belém.⁸

Education

When Claudomiro was young, a while after his baptism, at the invitation of Pastor Halliwell, he worked as an office-boy at the former Baixo Amazonas Mission (MBA), located in his hometown. Claudomiro completed primary and secondary school at Escola Comercial (Commercial School) in Belém. Later, he got an opportunity to go to southeastern Brazil to study at an Adventist institution. Claudomiro started high school at the current Petropolis Adventist Academy in Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro, and completed it at the Brazil Adventist College (CAB), now Brazil Adventist University, São Paulo campus, in 1942.⁹

As an adult, Claudomiro completed the accounting course at the Fênix Caixeiral Cearense School as well as finances at the College of Commerce (Faculdade de Comércio) of Ceará, both in Fortaleza. The last degree completed by Pastor Claudomiro was a bachelor's degree in philosophy and history from the Federal University of Pará, in Belém.¹⁰

Ministry

After graduating from Brazil Adventist College, he worked briefly as an accounting assistant at the Lower Amazon Mission (Missão Baixo Amazonas).¹¹ Claudomiro was present with the Union's administration at the inauguration and efforts to found the Novo Remanso Church, in the state of Amazonas, at the former Central Amazon Mission (current Central Amazon Conference); the Remanso Church was built as one of the first floating churches, a tendency that would become common in northern Brazil.¹²

In 1945, he was called to Fortaleza, where he acted as treasurer of the former North Coast Mission, where he stayed for about five years. From Fortaleza he went to São Paulo where he worked as an accounting professor in the Commercial program at Brazil Adventist University, São Paulo campus.¹³

In 1957, he returned to Belém and became treasurer of the Lower Amazon Mission for four years. Later, he assumed the management of the [Adventist Hospital of Belém](#). In Belém, he became pastor of the Pedreira

Church District, which was his first pastoral experience outside the administrative area. After a while as a district pastor, he was invited to work at the Grão Pará Adventist Institute, where he served for about six years,¹⁴ acting as a director,¹⁵ treasurer, and teacher.¹⁶ Claudomiro was one of the first people to propose the creation of a boarding school and missionary training center for young people in Northern Brazil.¹⁷

In 1969, Pastor Claudomiro made a missionary trip to the territory of the former North Coast Mission. On this trip, he had the opportunity to offer preparatory courses for lay brothers, award certificates for Bible courses and verify the growth of the Adventist School in São Luís, Maranhão.¹⁸

Towards the end of his career, he assumed the position of Youth and Education director of the Lower Amazon Mission,¹⁹ being the first Education director in Northern Brazil,²⁰ the Stewardship Department of that field.²¹ Claudomiro was one of the organizers of some important Youth events in the Brazil Northern Union, such as: the 1st Congress of Adventist University Students, held in Belém, from July 21 to 25, 1971;²² and the Amazon Volunteer Missionaries Congress (now Adventist Youth Ministry), in July, 1972.²³

Pastor Claudomiro Franco da Fonseca worked for about 40 years in the [North Brazil Union Mission](#), serving in that same Union throughout his ministry.²⁴ Claudomiro began his ministry around 1944, was ordained to the pastoral ministry in 1955, and retired in 1977.²⁵

Contributions, Recognition, and Honors

Claudomiro stood out for his excellent work in various branches of the Adventist pastoral ministry and is considered one of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Northern Brazil.²⁶ His work gave him many remarkable experiences, and his legacy—even during his lifetime—was honored in various ways by sectors of the church and society.

Claudomiro and some other leaders of the Adventist Church in Northern Brazil were curiously and accidentally involved in the discovery of oil in the state of Amazonas; this account can be read in full in the book *My Life as a Pastor*, by Tércio Sarli.²⁷

Pastor Claudomiro Fonseca was one of the leaders of the delegation of 155 Brazilians who participated in the First World Congress of Adventist Youth (at the time Volunteer Missionaries), with the theme: “Follow me,” which occurred from July 22 to 26, 1969, at the Hallenstadion in Zurich, Switzerland. The event was directed by Pastor Teodoro Lucas, Youth leader of the General Conference, and attracted approximately 13,000 Adventists from around the world. The highlight of the program was the launch of the evangelistic project: “One by One.”²⁸ Claudomiro and other pastors were honored at the inauguration of the Luzeiro XV boat on March 5, 1978, at the time the largest Luzeiro unit in the North Brazil Union Mission.²⁹

In 1991, at the 30th anniversary of the Grão Pará Adventist Institute, Pastor Claudomiro received a special tribute from the school’s administration, represented by Teacher Nazaré Mota, for his services to the institution.³⁰ Years

later, during the 50th anniversary celebration of the Grão Pará Adventist Institute in 2011, the school's library was reopened, containing 12 computers and nearly 500 literary works. The new library received the name of Pastor Claudomiro Fonseca in honor of his years of service to this pioneering Adventist educational institution in Northern Brazil. On the same occasion, his wife, Esmeralda, received a commemorative plaque in recognition of her pioneering work in education.³¹

In the social sector, in 2006, Pastor Claudomiro received the *Pedro Teixeira* medal from the municipality of Belém for educational activities provided to the local community.³² Later, on January 12, 2006, he received the *Francisco Caldeira Castelo Branco* medal, the highest honor granted by the municipality of Belém to people who have distinguished themselves through services rendered for the good of the city.³³

Final Years

After retiring, Pastor Claudomiro was invited to serve as supervisor of the educational system offered by the American natural resources company Jari Florestal to its employees and their families, serving approximately 4,000 students. While working for this secular company, Claudomiro gradually had the opportunity to preach the Adventist message, starting a group in his own home.³⁴

Pastor Claudomiro also volunteered as chaplain at the Adventist Hospital of Belém and helped with the project of planting a church in the hospital's neighborhood, with the goal of attracting the secularized population.³⁵ Claudomiro Franco da Fonseca passed away on May 2, 2013.³⁶

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NOTES

1. Tércio Sarli. *Minha Vida De Pastor: Cinquenta e três pastores jubilados falam de sua vida e de seu ministério*. Campinas, SP: Certeza Editorial, 2007, 91.
2. Ibid., 96.
3. Ibid., 93.
4. Ibid., 91.
5. Ibid., 92.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., 92, 93.
10. Ibid., 93, 94.
11. Ibid., 93.
12. Ibid., 95; Medrado, Rocha. "Inauguração de uma Igreja 'Única no Gênero,' na Missão Central-Amazonas." *Revista Adventista*, 50, no. 4 (April 1955): 9.
13. Tércio Sarli. *Minha Vida De Pastor: Cinquenta e três pastores jubilados falam de sua vida e de seu ministério*. Campinas, SP: Certeza Editorial, 2007, 93.

14. Ibid., 93, 94.
15. Ibid., 94; "HISTÓRIA." *Instituto Adventista Grão Pará*.
16. Tércio Sarli. *Minha Vida De Pastor: Cinquenta e três pastores jubilados falam de sua vida e de seu ministério*. Campinas, SP: Certeza Editorial, 2007, 94.
17. Claudomiro F. Fonseca. "Aquilo que Há Muito nos Falta!" *Revista Adventista*, 59, no. 3 (March 1964): 23, 24.
18. Isaías Andrandrade. "uninorte NOTÍCIAS." *Revista Adventista*, 65, no. 3 (March 1970) 26.
19. Tércio Sarli. *Minha Vida De Pastor: Cinquenta e três pastores jubilados falam de sua vida e de seu ministério*. Campinas, SP: Certeza Editorial, 2007, 94.
20. Claudio Vasconcelos Fonseca, interviewed by Jonatan Ferreira Nascimento. Centro de Pesquisas Ellen G. White: UNASP campus Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, 2025.
21. Tércio Sarli. *Minha Vida De Pastor: Cinquenta e três pastores jubilados falam de sua vida e de seu ministério*. Campinas, SP: Certeza Editorial, 2007, 94.
22. "Congresso MV da Amazônia." *Revista Adventista*, 66, no. 4 (April 1971): 21.
23. Ibid.
24. Tércio Sarli. *Minha Vida De Pastor: Cinquenta e três pastores jubilados falam de sua vida e de seu ministério*. Campinas, SP: Certeza Editorial, 2007, 99.
25. Ibid., 93, 94, 99.
26. Ibid.; Claudio Vasconcelos Fonseca, interviewed by Jonatan Ferreira Nascimento. Centro de Pesquisas Ellen G. White: UNASP campus Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, 2025.
27. Tércio Sarli. *Minha Vida De Pastor: Cinquenta e três pastores jubilados falam de sua vida e de seu ministério*. Campinas, SP: Certeza Editorial, 2007, 95, 96.
28. "Ecos do 1º Grande Congresso Mundial da Mocidade Adventista! Zurique-Suíça." *Revista Adventista*, 64, no. 12 (December 1969): 22, 23.
29. Levy Silveira, "Luzero XV-Mais uma Lancha Missionária." *Revista Adventista*, 73, no. 5 (May 1978).

30. Claudio Vasconcelos Fonseca, interviewed by Jonatan Ferreira Nascimento. Centro de Pesquisas Ellen G. White: UNASP campus Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, 2025.
31. Ibid.
32. Tércio Sarli. Minha Vida De Pastor: Cinquenta e três pastores jubilados falam de sua vida e de seu ministério. Campinas, SP: Certeza Editorial, 2007, 95.
33. Claudio Vasconcelos Fonseca, interviewed by Jonatan Ferreira Nascimento. Centro de Pesquisas Ellen G. White: UNASP campus Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, 2025.
34. Tércio Sarli. Minha Vida De Pastor: Cinquenta e três pastores jubilados falam de sua vida e de seu ministério. Campinas, SP: Certeza Editorial, 2007, 95.
35. Claudio Vasconcelos Fonseca, interviewed by Jonatan Ferreira Nascimento. Centro de Pesquisas Ellen G. White: UNASP campus Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo, 2025.
36. Ibid.

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