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“A Fine Field”: Rio de Janeiro’s Journey to Become a

Center of Strength for the LDS Church

Garret S. Shields

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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Department of Religious Education

Brigham Young University

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ABSTRACT

“A Fine Field”: Rio de Janeiro’s Journey to Become a Center of Strength for the LDS Church

Garret S. Shields

Department of Religious Education, BYU
Master of Arts

The purpose of this work is to chronicle the growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from its earliest beginnings in the late 1930s to the events surrounding the revelation on the priesthood in 1978. This thesis will show that as the Church in Rio became less American and more Brazilian, Church growth accelerated. When missionaries first began working in the city, its membership, leadership, culture, and even language was based on North American society and practices, and the Church struggled to establish itself. Only as these aspects of the Church became more Brazilian did it begin to have greater success in the area.

This survey history of the Church in Rio de Janeiro will begin in 1935 with the influential work of Daniel Shupe—a North American Church member who lived and worked in Rio and translated the Book of Mormon into Portuguese. We will then examine the work of the missionaries both before and after World War II, the growth of Brazilian Church leadership in the city, and how the Church established itself as a center of strength for the Church. Finally, our study will conclude with the 1978 revelation extending the priesthood to all worthy male members regardless of race and the immediate influence of that shift on the Church in the city. The focus of this work will be on the major factors and most influential individuals that affect Church growth and stability in Rio, thereby providing an in-depth study of the effects of language, culture, leadership, and race on the Church in this intriguing and influential city.

Keywords: Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, missionary work, growth of the international Church, Book of Mormon translation, native Church leadership, blacks and the priesthood

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When I started this graduate program almost four years ago, I had the ambitious idea to write the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. As a member of the Church who served his two-year mission in Rio, it would be a dream come true. Over the course of this graduate degree, it has taken help from many people to turn my dream into a reality. I would like to start by thanking my wonderful thesis committee: Alonzo Gaskill, Mark Grover, and Jared Ludlow. Without their help and guidance, this project would never have become a quality academic work. Additionally, Alonzo Gaskill has become a close personal friend and mentor. Also, Mark Grover, who has been the expert in this field his whole career, has been so generous with his time, materials, and counsel. I would not have even known where or how to start this project without his help and assistance.

I have also received great help from the wonderful missionaries and staff at the Church History Library. I spent hours there every week for almost a year, and owe them my great thanks. I especially received great counsel and guidance from two staff members with expertise on Church history in Latin America: Matt Geilman and Mike Landon. I was also very fortunate to become acquainted with some wonderful men and women who served missions in Rio de Janeiro in the past. These great people invited me into their homes and shared their photos, mission materials, and memories with me. Working with them was one of the great privileges of this whole project.

I also feel to thank the wonderful professors that helped me through this whole graduate program. I learned a great deal from each of them. Richard Bennett planted in me a love for research in primary sources and taught me that writing the history is the price we pay for the privilege of researching these fascinating topics. Richard Cowan and J.B. Haws first guided me

through the challenging waters of Church history research in the twentieth century. The list of wonderful teachers that have mentored me through this program goes on and on. Additionally, my fellow cohort members became some of my very best friends. They helped me through the difficult challenges my family has experienced during this program and inspired and encouraged me to become the best scholar I can be.

Additionally, I could not have accomplished this project without the help and support of my wonderful family. My parents, Scott and Kim Shields, instilled in me a love for education. My parents-in-law, Kevin and Cindy Eppich, have been some of my biggest supporters through this whole program. My greatest appreciation, however, goes to my heavenly wife, Karli. Before I started this degree, I asked a friend for advice on how to successfully get a graduate degree. His response was: "Have a great wife!" Well, Karli is the greatest. I feel inadequate attempting to describe in a few sentences all that Karli has done for me and for our little family during these last few years. Approximately two years into this graduate program, we were blessed with an adorable little girl, Sarah. Karli has, at times, acted as a single parent while I have spent late nights, early mornings, and long weekends on this thesis. I know that I could not have hoped and dreamed for a more amazing spouse to have at my side through all the experiences of this life and beyond. More than anything else, this work is a tribute to the greatness of my beautiful, wonderful wife.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
Chapter 1: “A Fine Field”	1
A Brief History of the Expansion of the LDS Church	2
Rio de Janeiro.....	4
Race, the Priesthood, and Rio de Janeiro	7
Historiography and Relevance.....	11
Thesis Overview and Methodology	16
Chapter 2: Initial Establishment of the Church (1935-45)	19
Daniel G. Shupe and the Portuguese Translation of The Book of Mormon.....	21
Missionaries Arrive in Rio de Janeiro.....	31
The Missionaries Leave	46
Chapter 3: Reestablishment of the Church (1945-1958)	53
Missionaries Return to Rio de Janeiro	55
Attempting Brazilian Leadership.....	67
Chapter 4: Significant Growth (1958-1968)	80
Member Organizations	83
Missionary Work.....	95
Chapter 5: Center of Church Strength (1968-1978).....	103
Growth as a Center of Church Strength.....	104
Blacks in the Church and the Priesthood Revelation.....	114

Chapter 6: “Ever Onward”	126
APPENDIX A: “Lineage Lesson” Outline	132
APPENDIX B: Church Membership in Rio de Janeiro, 1940-1974	141
BIBLIOGRAPHY	142
Primary Sources	142
Secondary Sources.....	146

Chapter 1

“A Fine Field”

On Saturday, April 6, 2013, thousands of people gathered at the Conference Center of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Millions more around the world gathered around their televisions, radios, computer screens, and more to hear the leaders of the Church give counsel, convey the doctrines of the Church, and announce policies and plans for the future. As is customary at these semi-annual general conferences Thomas S. Monson, the President of the Church, rose to welcome everyone and to give his introductory remarks. He began by talking about his travels around the world dedicating two temples: the Calgary Alberta Temple and the Boise Idaho Temple. He then said: “It is my privilege this morning to announce two additional temples, which in coming months and years will be built in the following locations: Cedar City, Utah, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Brothers and Sisters, temple building continues unabated.”¹

Thousands of miles away, a congregation of Church members gathered in a chapel in Andaraí, one of the *bairros* or neighborhoods in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.² As they watched the satellite broadcast of the conference, and as President Monson began announcing the new temples, local church member, Daniel Aquilini, caught the reaction on video. Once the interpreter for President Monson said the words, “Rio de Janeiro,” the church members shouted

¹ Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign* May 2013, 4.

² The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Meetinghouse Locator: Rio de Janeiro Andaraí Stake Center,” <http://www.lds.org/maps/?lang=eng#ll=-22.921378,-43.245256&z=18&m=google.road> (accessed February 5, 2016). In Brazil, each city is divided into separate neighborhoods or districts called, “*bairros*.” Andaraí is one of those districts. In this paper, all the Portuguese sources in this paper are quoted in English, the translation having been done by the author.

and clapped their hands. One man even rose from his seat and ran out of the camera's view with his hands raised in the air.³ For Latter-day Saints living in Rio, this was a significant moment.

The building of a temple in a given city is an important milestone, and serves as evidence of the strength and establishment of the Church in that area. The Church in the Rio de Janeiro area had grown from humble beginnings, through periods of significant challenges and periods of significant progress, until it had reached this pinnacle for the Church in a given region.⁴ The purpose of this work is to chronicle this growth in the area of Rio de Janeiro, from its earliest beginnings in the late 1930s, to the events surrounding the revelation on the priesthood in 1978. This thesis will show that as the Church in Rio became less American and more Brazilian, Church growth accelerated.⁵ When missionaries first began working in the city, its membership, leadership, culture, and even language was based on North American culture and practices and, thus, the Church struggled to establish itself. Only as these aspects of the Church became more Brazilian did it begin to have greater success in the area.

A Brief History of the Expansion of the LDS Church

In rural New York in the nineteenth century, Joseph Smith, Jr. founded what is now known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. After Smith's 1844 martyrdom, and because of the saints' continual persecution, the Church moved to the Great Basin region of the western United States. Despite the harsh conditions, the Church thrived in the remote

³ LDSChurchTemples.com, "Temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Rio de Janeiro," <http://www.ldschurchtemples.com/riodejaneiro/> (accessed February 5, 2016), and Daniel Aquilini, "Announcement of the New Temple in Rio de Janeiro Brazil," <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10152720560925285> (accessed February 5, 2016).

⁴ The announcement of a temple is evidence of the size and stability of the Church in that region.

⁵ Throughout this thesis, I use the term "American" to refer to the United States of America. While I recognize that citizens of other nations are correct in asserting that "America" could also be used to refer to any country in North or South America, I have followed the common practice for this work's English-speaking audience.

Intermountain West, establishing settlements as far north as Canada and as far south as Mexico, and growing to tens of thousands of members. Even as it established itself in the relative isolation of the western United States, the Church consistently sent missionaries to other parts of the world to preach the gospel.⁶

The first missionaries of the Church focused their efforts in the United States and Canada. During the middle of the nineteenth century, the Church also sent missionaries to Western and then Eastern Europe. As the nineteenth century came to a close and the twentieth began, efforts were made to expand the Church into other areas of the globe, including parts of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific islands. Other than Mexico, Latin America remained relatively untouched by Mormon missionaries until the early part of the twentieth century. In 1925, the Church officially opened work in South America, beginning in Argentina. The first missionaries then arrived in Brazil in the late 1920s, and missionaries first began working in Rio de Janeiro approximately a decade later.⁷

The missionaries in Brazil engaged in various proselyting activities. One of the most common was “tracting.” This involved missionaries going door-to-door, often distributing Church tracts or materials in an effort to teach families, among other things, that after centuries of apostasy God once again established the true Church of Jesus Christ on the earth through a

⁶ The Mormon missionary is one of the most recognizable symbols of the Church. The image of two young men in white shirts and ties talking to people on the street or in their homes has come to be synonymous with the LDS Church. The majority of missionaries are young men, but young women can also serve missions. These young men, who are given the title of “Elder,” and young women, given the title of “Sister,” are supervised by a mission president, who has jurisdiction over a specific geographic region.

⁷ Donald Q. Cannon and Richard O. Cowan, *Unto Every Nation: Gospel Light Reaches Every Land* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2003), xi-xvi, 255-267; Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, August 14, 1939, p. 524, “Brazil São Paulo North Mission Manuscript History and Historical Reports” Collection (hereafter cited as “Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission”), Church History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, UT (hereafter cited as “Church History Library”).

prophet name Joseph Smith. Missionaries also engaged in contacting individuals in the street, holding street meetings and exhibitions, and seeking referrals from members or acquaintances.⁸ Over the course of the history of the Church in Rio de Janeiro, these and other approaches were employed by these eager young missionaries as they attempted to share their gospel message with the inhabitants of the area.

Rio de Janeiro

Rio de Janeiro is a coastal city in the southeast region of Brazil. Its Guanabara Bay first attracted European colonizers in the sixteenth century. The area was established as a port city that, for centuries, was primarily used to transport sugarcane, gold, and African slaves. Then, in the early 1800s—when Napoleon conquered Portugal—King João VI was forced to flee Europe to Brazil, establishing Rio de Janeiro as his home. The city served as the imperial capital of the Portuguese empire for several decades, until Brazil (in the late nineteenth century) established its own separate republic. Through various regimes, Rio continued to serve as the country’s capital until 1960, when Brasília was declared the capital. Even after it was no longer the center of the Brazilian government, Rio de Janeiro continued to be a cultural and military center for the country.⁹

⁸ Mark L. Grover, “Mormonism in Brazil: Religion and Dependency in Latin America,” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1985), 69-72, 107-110.

⁹ One of the most informative general histories of Brazil is Boris Fausto, *A Concise History of Brazil*, trans. Arthur Brakel (Melbourne, Australia: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Also, the most comprehensive cultural history of Rio de Janeiro was recently published. [Bruno Carvalho, *Porous City: A Cultural History of Rio de Janeiro (from the 1810s onward)* (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 1988)] For a recently-published article giving a simple overview of the history and culture of Rio de Janeiro, readers can consult Michael Sommers, “History and Culture,” in *National Geographic Traveler: Rio de Janeiro* (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2014).



A map of Brazil, with the state of Rio de Janeiro darkened [“Rio de Janeiro, State of” https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rio_de_Janeiro,_State_of.png (accessed March 1, 2016)]

For decades, Rio de Janeiro has been one of the most captivating cities in the world. The natural beauty of the region, coupled with the rich cultural atmosphere that has developed in the city, has set this metropolis apart from any other in the world. Its towering jungle-forested mountains, beautiful sun-drenched beaches, and colorful samba parades have inspired artists and attracted tourists and pleasure-seekers for decades. On the other hand, Rio is almost equally well-known for its sprawling *favelas* (slums), unyielding gang violence, and permeating governmental corruption. The city’s fame has only grown in recent years with the release of such major motion pictures as the critically acclaimed Brazilian-made *City of God*, as well as the popular Hollywood blockbusters *Rio* and *Fast Five*. This worldwide fame and attention continues to grow as the city serves as host for the 2014 Soccer World Cup and 2016 Summer Olympics.



Map of Rio de Janeiro and Niterói across the Guanabara Bay, listing several of the *bairros* in the two cities. [“Baía de Guanabara-Mapa Histórico e Atual” (Guanabara Bay-Historical Map and Current), <http://www.riodejaneiroaqui.com/portugues/baia-guanabara-mapa.html> (accessed January 16, 2016)].

Not only has the city developed a unique personality, but its citizens, known as *cariocas*, have also developed theirs as well. Fernando Sabino, a Brazilian author who lived in Rio for approximately sixty years, gave the following vivid description of “the carioca”:

A carioca will call you by your first name the first time you meet, and by the second time he will be your childhood friend, patting you on the back affectionately and hugging you in the middle of the street, celebrating that wonderful event of two people meeting. It is convenient to know that most appointments, dates and meetings are not pre-arranged, and people meet just because it happens and so they just show up when they feel like it. Pre-arranged meetings at a fixed time are a myth for the carioca ... And what conversation! They talk, argue, pull faces, elbow each other, tell jokes, laugh, suddenly call out to greet someone on the other side of the street, shut up when a good-looking woman walks by them, pass comments about her, and—back to their conversation. Nobody seems to listen to anyone; everybody is talking at the same time and roaring with laughter.¹⁰

These are the colorful and exciting people that populate this colorful and exciting city, interacting with the world around them with a passion, exuberance, and playfulness that it is difficult to find anywhere else.

¹⁰ Fernando Sabino, “The Carioca,” in Aaron Cohen, *Rio de Janeiro* (New York: Crescent Books, 1978), 2.

From 1947 to 1951, while Angelo Mendes de Morais was mayor of Rio, the city's Department of Tourism and Exhibitions published a pamphlet that introduced tourists to the city. In the opening statement, Mayor Morais, quoted a popular song of the day, calling Rio "the wonder city," and he promised tourists that their stay would be filled with "enchanted days."¹¹ Those living in the city experience this at both extremes. They suffer through a city with "torrential rainstorms, ... pick-pockets and 'working girls'" on the street. Then, they also get to experience "the gyrations of samba, feijoada (traditional meal with beans and sun-dried meats) on Saturdays, Fla-Flu (soccer match between two popular Rio-based teams, Flamengo and Fluminense) at the Maracanã Stadium, and a carnival which left people with goose-bumps just to see the beauty which is a samba school parading."¹² This unique city, full of these unique people, plays the central role in the study at hand.

Race, the Priesthood, and Rio de Janeiro

Rio de Janeiro, like many large urban areas, is a melting pot of people from many different cultures and countries. Because it was a major trading port in the slave trade, a significant portion of the population was of African descent, which presented challenges for the Church in the city. The topic of the relationship between race and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is one of the most often discussed and hotly debated. Many intriguing treatises have been written on the subject.¹³ The most controversial element of this relationship was the

¹¹ Angelo Mendes de Morais, "Introduction," in *Rio de Janeiro: The Wonder City* (Rio de Janeiro: Department of Tourism and Exhibitions of Rio de Janeiro Municipality, 1947-1951), 1.

¹² Fábio Sombra, *Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Viana & Moseley, 2004), 9.

¹³ The most recent comprehensive academic study of race and the Church is the *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness* by W. Paul Reeve (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015). Reeve argues that the Church's racial practices, policies, and beliefs are a reaction to the racial discrimination against them. He asserts that, as the larger society attempted to portray the Mormons as being an inferior people, similar to other non-whites, Mormons responded by trying to establish themselves as white and above other races, including blacks. Another recently published landmark study on the topic is Armaund L. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children: Changing*

Church's policy—that began in the mid-nineteenth century and continued until 1978—which restricted men of black African descent from holding the priesthood.¹⁴ This priesthood restriction greatly affected the growth of the Church in Rio de Janeiro and, therefore, is a recurring theme throughout this work. Because of its significance, it is important to understand the context for the policy and how it was implemented in Brazil.

The Church was founded in the United States during a time of great racial tension, where whites were given many privileges over those of other races. Historian Paul Reeve wrote that “being white equaled access to political, social, and economic power.”¹⁵ During the era of the prophet Joseph Smith, at least two men, Elijah Abel and Q. Walker Lewis, were granted the priesthood. After establishing the Church in the Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young, Smith's successor, said in a speech to the Utah Territorial Legislature that men of black African descent would be restricted from holding the priesthood. Over the coming years, the policy grew to also restrict black men and women from receiving temple ordinances, including the marriage sealing that allows family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave.¹⁶ Church leaders had taught, however, that these blessings would one day be made available to all.¹⁷

Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003). Mauss sheds light on the development of racial identities within the Church, looking specifically at their attitudes towards Native Americans, Jews, and blacks. Significantly, the Church recently published a fairly in-depth essay on their “Gospel Topics” page entitled “Race and the Priesthood.” [<https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng#14> (accessed January 13, 2016)] While still presenting a faithful perspective, the essay is surprisingly open regarding the origins of the Church's priesthood restriction and its cultural context.

¹⁴ The priesthood ban did not begin on a specific date, but it seems to have gradually taken effect. The first known announcement of a “race-based priesthood restriction” was Brigham Young's speech to the Utah Territorial Legislature in 1852. [Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color*, 142]

¹⁵ Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color*, 3.

¹⁶ Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color*, 142, 196-201.

¹⁷ In 1852, Brigham Young said that “the day will Come when all the [black race] will be Redeemed & have all the Blessings we have now & a great deal more.” [quoted in Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal: 1833-1898 Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983), 4:97] Additionally, President David O. McKay, President of the Church from 1951 to 1970, wrote that “sometime in God's eternal plan, the Negro will be given the right to hold the priesthood.” [This

During the Civil Rights Movement of the twentieth century, perceptions of race changed significantly in the United States. At that time, several Church leaders desired to change the policy. President David O. McKay is said to have appointed a special committee of the Quorum of the Twelve to study the issue, and they “concluded that the priesthood ban had no clear basis in scripture,” but that the members of the Church were not prepared for change. Despite the lack of concrete scriptural support, the General Authorities of the Church felt that they needed a revelation from God to make such a significant change. It was not until 1978 that this revelation was received, and the ban was lifted.¹⁸

During the time the priesthood ban was in effect, several theories were given to justify the policy. The first and most popular was that blacks “descended from the same lineage as the biblical Cain, who slew his brother Abel,” and that God’s curse on Cain was dark skin.¹⁹ Another popular theory was that black skin was a “second curse placed upon Noah’s grandson Canaan” because of his father Ham’s indiscretion in seeing Noah’s nakedness.²⁰ Also, around the beginning of the twentieth century, the theory began to develop that those of black African descent were cursed because they had been less faithful during the premortal existence, taking a

quote can be found in Llewelyn McKay, *Home Memories of President David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1956), 231. It was later republished as part of a larger letter from David O. McKay in William E. Berrett, “The Church and the Negroid People” in John J. Stewart, *Mormonism and the Negro* (Logan, UT: Bookmark Division of Community Press Publishing Company, 1960), 18-23.] Shortly after the revelation ending the priesthood ban, an article published in the *Church News* entitled “Prophets Tell of Promise to All Races,” [(June 17, 1978), 4-6] cited these as well as other statements from various Church Presidents, such as Heber J. Grant, Harold B. Lee, and Spencer W. Kimball, each stating that a time would come when the blessings of the priesthood would be extended to blacks.

¹⁸ Edward L. Kimball, “Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on the Priesthood,” *Brigham Young University Studies* 47 (Spring 2008): 10, 19-22, 54-59. During the years of the priesthood ban, many members of the Church, including Church leaders, cited various scriptures as support for the restriction. At this time, however, members of the Quorum of the Twelve felt that there was no clear scriptural support.

¹⁹ “Race and the Priesthood.” This theory did not originate with the Mormons, but had been taught in the United States from at least 1733 onward. [David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 178]

²⁰ “Race and the Priesthood;” Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, 175.

“neutral position” in the spiritual battle against Lucifer.²¹ Though these theories were never given official status by the Church, they were often shared by members, and even missionaries, as justifications for the policy.²²

This priesthood restriction provided many obstacles to the growth of the Church around the world. Because the policy was based on an American perception of race, when Church leaders and missionaries tried to implement it in other countries, not only did it limit the Church’s growth, it was also incredibly difficult for those in other countries to understand. Such was the case in Brazil. Like most Latin American countries, Brazilian society is largely void of “institutional racial classification systems... resulting in blurred or ambiguous boundaries around racial categories.” This allowed people “to move in and out” of their classifications. This also resulted in a largely mixed racial society, especially in the northern parts of Brazil. In addition, Brazilian perceptions of race had a “focus on appearance rather than origin as the primary criterion.”²³ These conditions in Brazil were only exacerbated in Rio de Janeiro, which had a large population of black people due to its history of being involved in the African slave trade.

The priesthood restriction provided many problems for the Church in Brazil, especially in Rio de Janeiro. First, because Brazilian society is so heterogeneous, it was incredibly difficult to implement the ban, given the incredible uncertainty surrounding any Brazilian’s racial heritage. It was almost impossible to determine with certainty that someone was completely void of black African blood.²⁴ Second, due to a completely different perception of race, and the lack of a

²¹ Joseph Fielding Smith to Alfred M. Nelson, January 31, 1907, Church History Library.

²² “Lineage Lesson” outline, in Jeff Barneck’s Personal Mission Documents. A copy of this document has been included in Appendix A.

²³ Edward Telles and Tianna Paschel, “Who Is Black, White, or Mixed Race?: How Skin Color, Status, and Nation Shape Racial Classification in Latin America,” *American Journal of Sociology* 120, no. 3 (November 2014): 865.

²⁴ For example, because race was so mixed in Brazil, occasionally men were ordained to the priesthood and then later it was discovered that they had black African heritage. [See Asael Sorensen,

logical justification for the policy, it was very difficult for Brazilians to understand the policy. Third, missionaries and Church leaders were attempting to develop the Church in this new country, so they focused on teaching and baptizing people that could become future leaders of the Church. Because most Church leadership positions for men necessitate the priesthood, this meant that missionaries could not focus their efforts on those whom they knew to have African heritage. In fact, as we will see in later chapters, mission presidents in Brazil often instructed their missionaries to avoid teaching those with African heritage.²⁵ This thesis does not seek to answer all questions regarding race and the LDS Church, but rather to shed light on the race-related issues and challenges the Church faced in Rio de Janeiro.

Historiography and Relevance

This work will also fill a void in the historical literature on the international history of the Church. Mormon history has been a fascinating subject for many scholars over the years. Literature on the topic is extensive and varied, but a vast amount of this literature focuses on the history of the Church in the United States during the nineteenth century. Some scholars have focused their work on the twentieth century, but few have written on the Church in Latin America, and even fewer on the history of the Church in Brazil.

The preeminent scholar on Church history in Latin America is Dr. Mark Grover. His first major work on the subject was his dissertation, “Mormonism in Brazil: Religion and Dependency in Latin America.” In it, Grover describes how the LDS Church has responded to

interview by Gordon Irving, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 1973, transcript, p. 9-12, Church History Library; Grover, “Mormonism in Brazil,” 261-262.]

²⁵ Rulon S. Howells, interview by Gordon Irving, Salt Lake City, UT, January 18-19, 1973, transcript, p. 62, Church History Library; Lloyd Hicken, interview by Mark Grover, Bountiful, UT, September 26, 2001, transcript, p. 12-13, Mormonism in Brazil: Oral History Project, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT (hereafter cited as “Mormonism in Brazil: Oral History Project”). The interviews cited as part of the Mormonism in Brazil: Oral History Project are currently found in the possession of Mark Grover, but will soon be donated to the existing library collection.

local pressures, while still keeping centralized control; a feat that many international Christian denominations have struggled to accomplish. Grover convincingly argues that, by retaining ultimate central control, “the Church has been able to survive by changing and adjusting to environmental pressures and threats.”²⁶

Grover has also published other important works on the Church in Latin America. For example, his most in-depth work on the reasons for the growth of Mormonism in Latin America is “The Maturing of the Oak: The Dynamics of LDS Growth in Latin America.”²⁷ In the article, Grover asserts that “LDS growth in this region is part of a much larger reformation of religious belief and practice in Latin America and also a result of changes that occurred within the Church itself.”²⁸ He also wrote *A Land of Promise and Prophecy: Elder A. Theodore Tuttle in South America, 1960-1965*, which gives an overview history of the Church in South America while Elder Tuttle, an LDS General Authority, was supervising the Church in the region.²⁹

Others have also written academic works on the Church in Brazil. Marcus Martins, a Brazilian Latter-day Saint from Rio de Janeiro, wrote his dissertation on the topic. His work, “The Oak Tree Revisited: Brazilian LDS Leaders’ Insights on the Growth of the Church in Brazil,” provides a “‘status report’ on the LDS Church in Brazil after 60 years ... in the country.” His dissertation also provides “information concerning the Church ... in Brazil from the point of view of a non-American, thus offering fresh perspectives” on the subject.³⁰

²⁶ Mark Grover, “Mormonism in Brazil: Religion and Dependency in Latin America,” (PhD. diss, Indiana University, 1985), 294.

²⁷ Mark Grover, “The Maturing of the Oak: The Dynamics of LDS Growth in Latin America,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38 (Summer 2005): 79-104.

²⁸ Mark Grover, “The Maturing of the Oak,” 80.

²⁹ Mark Grover, *A Land of Promise and Prophecy: Elder A. Theodore Tuttle in South America, 1960-1965* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2008).

³⁰ Marcus Martins, “The Oak Tree Revisited: Brazilian LDS Leaders’ Insights on the Growth of the Church in Brazil,” (PhD. diss, Brigham Young University, 1996), 4.

Also, two master's theses have been published about specific regions of Brazil. First, Nádia Fernanda Maia de Amorim wrote "Os Mormons Em Alagoas: Religião e Relações Raciais (*Mormons in Alagoas: Religion and Race Relations*)," which discusses the tensions that arose when Brazilian converts in the city of Maceió joined the Church and came in contact with North American racial prejudice.³¹ Second, Scooter Plowman's thesis, "Strength in Numbers: A Detailed History of the Growth of the LDS Church in Ribeirão Preto, Brazil," examined the growth of the Church in Ribeirão Preto in São Paulo, Brazil.³²

Lastly, Church members have also produced works on the history of the Church in Brazil that tell the story from a faithful perspective. One of these is Donald Cannon and Richard Cowan's *Unto Every Nation: Gospel Light Reaches Every Land*.³³ Their book provides a condensed history of the expansion of the Church into each part of the world, including a chapter on how the Church arrived in Brazil. Additionally, Rulon S. Howells wrote an article titled, "The Beginnings of the Brazilian Mission."³⁴ This is a firsthand account written by the man who served as the first mission president of the Brazilian Mission, and who later returned to serve as mission president in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Though these are quality works that fulfill the purposes for which they were written, they are merely a start to the body of literature that should be written on the immense and fascinating history of the Church in Brazil. Over the last few decades Brazil has become a center of strength

³¹ Nádia Fernanda Maia de Amorim, "Os Mormons Em Alagoas: Religião e Relações Raciais," (master's thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 1981).

³² Scooter Plowman, "Strength in Numbers: A Detailed History of the Growth of the LDS Church in Ribeirão Preto, Brazil," (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2008).

³³ Donald Q. Cannon and Richard O. Cowan, *Unto Every Nation: Gospel Light Reaches Every Land* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2003).

³⁴ Rulon Howells, "The Beginnings of the Brazilian Mission," in Frederick Salem Williams and Frederick G. Williams, *From Acorn to Oak Tree: A Personal History of the Establishment and First Quarter Century Development of the South American Missions* (Fullerton, CA: Et Cetera, Et Cetera Graphics, 1987), 333-339.

for the Church. Shortly after Elders M. Russell Ballard and Neil L. Andersen made their 2012 visit to Brazil, the Church published an article titled: “Brazil is Rising.” The article stated, “Brazil is a nation on the rise, growing in economic and political pre-eminence in South America and in the world as it prepares to host international events such as the 2014 World Cup of futebol (soccer) and the 2016 Summer Olympics. It is also a nation where the Church is on the rise.”³⁵ Then, in May of 2014, another member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Russell M. Nelson, described Brazil as “part of the heart of the Church.”³⁶

As evidence of its strength within the LDS Church, Brazil has the third highest number of members of the Church living in its boundaries, behind only the United States and Mexico. The worldwide membership of the Church has risen to slightly over fifteen million and approximately 8% of those members live in Brazil.³⁷ As evidence of the incredible growth occurring in the country, the Church announced in February of 2013 that it would be adding seven new missions to the twenty-seven already existing in the country.³⁸ Additionally, the Church in 2016 has six operating temples in Brazil, with another under construction in Fortaleza, and one announced for Rio de Janeiro.³⁹

³⁵ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Brazil Is Rising,” <http://www.lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/brazil-is-rising?lang=eng> (accessed January 15, 2016).

³⁶ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Brazil Is ‘Part of Heart of the Church,’ Says Elder Nelson,” <https://www.lds.org/church/news/brazil-is-part-of-heart-of-the-church-says-elder-nelson?lang=eng> (accessed January 15, 2016).

³⁷ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Facts & Statistics,” <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/facts-and-statistics/> (accessed January 15, 2016); these facts on the Church in Brazil are from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Facts & Statistics: Brazil,” <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/facts-and-statistics/country/brazil> (accessed January 15, 2016).

³⁸ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “List of 58 Additional Missions Being Created,” <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/list-of-58-additional-missions-created> (accessed January 15, 2016). Each new mission means the Church has grown in a given region sufficiently to merit more missionaries in the area and a mission president to govern the work in that specific region.

³⁹ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Temples,” <http://www.lds.org/church/temples/find-a-temple?lang=eng&sort=location&sort-direction=up> (accessed January 15, 2016).

As stated earlier, both within the Church and within the larger worldwide society, more attention and focus is being placed on Rio de Janeiro than ever before as the city hosts significant world events and has a temple constructed in the area. The city, however, has already played very important roles in the Church for several decades. The first Portuguese translation of the Book of Mormon was produced by a member living in Rio. Additionally, three of the first four Brazilian General Authorities of the Church had deep connections to the city: Hélio da Rocha Camargo, Helvécio Martins, and Athos Amorim.⁴⁰ Significantly, Elder Helvécio Martins, who lived nearly his entire life in the Rio de Janeiro metropolitan area, was the first man of black African descent to become a General Authority in the post-modern era.⁴¹

To this point, while some works have been written on the history of the Church in the country of Brazil, nothing has been written specifically on Rio de Janeiro. Some aspects of the city have been mentioned in other works on Mormon history, but the story of the Church in Rio has yet to be told. While it is impossible in such a short piece to tell the entire history of the Church in this significant city—and to tell it with all the nuance that narrative deserves—it is my sincere hope that this thesis will take some small step toward filling this significant void in Church history.

⁴⁰ Each of these men lived a significant portion of their lives in the area surrounding the city of Rio de Janeiro. Two of them, Elders Martins and Amorim, were born and raised in Rio.

⁴¹ Elijah Abel was ordained a Seventy in December of 1836, in Kirtland, Ohio, and his call was confirmed later in Nauvoo. [W. Kesler Jackson, *Elijah Abel: The Life and Times of a Black Priesthood Holder* (Springville, UT: CFI, 2013), 69] While the term “General Authority” was not used back then, the Seventies did function at a general, rather than local, level during Abel’s time. [B.H. Roberts, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1980), 2:202-203; S. Kent Brown, “Seventy,” in ed. Arnold K. Garr, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard O. Cowan, *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2000), 1092] Though Elder Martins is considered by many to be the first black General Authority in the Church, it may be more accurate to say that he is the first in the post-modern era, or the first after the priesthood restriction was lifted. In a sense, though he may not have been the first “General Authority” of black African descent, he can be said to have “broken the color barrier” after the extension of the priesthood.

Thesis Overview and Methodology

For the purpose of this thesis, the history of the Church in Rio between the years of 1935 and 1978 will be divided into four different time periods. Our study will begin with the earliest official efforts of the Church in the city, beginning in 1935—with the influential work of Daniel Shupe—a North American Church member who lived and worked in Rio. And our study will conclude with the 1978 revelation on the priesthood and its immediate influence on the Church in the city. Chapter two will cover the initial establishment of the Church from 1935 to 1945, including the 1939 arrival of missionaries, and their withdrawal from the city during World War II. Chapter three will then examine the work of the Church from 1945 to 1958, when the missionaries returned to Rio and reestablished the Church in that city. Next, chapter four will chronicle the transformation of the Church during a period of significant growth from 1958 to 1968, which culminated in the creation of a Church mission headquartered in the city. Finally, chapter five will present the history of the Church in Rio from 1968 through 1978, when Rio became a center of Church strength in Brazil. Chapter five will also discuss the circumstances of the Church members and missionaries in Rio leading up to the announcement that the priesthood would be extended to all worthy male members, as well as the immediate influence of the revelation in that part of the world.

The focus of each of these chapters will be to detail the growth of the Church in Rio de Janeiro, and to illustrate that the Church grew more rapidly in the city as it became less American and more Brazilian. This thesis will follow a chronological approach in examining the expansion of the Church, with a focus on the major factors and most influential individuals that affect Church growth and stability in Rio. Because this thesis covers such a vast time period, there is not sufficient space in this work to delve deeply into some of the wonderful themes,

events, and individuals that merit significant attention. I leave those efforts for future projects and other scholars.

Because of the challenges associated with the broad scope and the international focus of this thesis, I developed a fairly distinct methodology. First, much of the factual information regarding the history of the Church in the area came from manuscript histories housed in the Church History Library archives. All organizations within the Church (i.e., missions, branches, districts, wards, etc.) are required to regularly create and submit to Church headquarters a detailed history of their activities. These have been collected in the Church History Library in Salt Lake City. While the quality of these histories varies greatly, many of the early entries provide vital information and detailed descriptions of the Church in a given area.

After gaining a fairly clear picture of the facts of the history of the Church in the city through the manuscript histories, it was then necessary to look at other sources to discover the personal elements of this history and the reasons behind the events. Most often, these personal sources were oral history interviews done by personnel from either the Church History Department or from Brigham Young University. Additionally, I was able to personally contact and interview several former missionaries who served in Rio de Janeiro during the time periods covered in this thesis. Therefore, several of the interviews cited in this thesis were performed by the author. These sources combine to paint a fascinating picture of the first four decades of the Church in the magnificent city of Rio de Janeiro.

Throughout this thesis, I refer to the Church in Brazil as being “American,” “Brazilian,” or even “German” at various stages of its history and growth. It is important to understand that I am not referring to the *doctrine* of the Church and its followers. Rather, I refer to the *culture* of the Church in Brazil: the nationality of its leaders and members, the proselyting approach of its

missionaries, and even the language used in Church meetings. The Church's core doctrines and universal gospel principles such as faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance do not change.

Additionally, some of the administrative practices and other elements of the Church in Brazil remain the same over the decades.⁴² The cultural essence of the Church evolves over time as its traits, characteristics, and activities change.⁴³ This thesis illustrates how the Church in Rio de Janeiro grows as it progresses from being culturally North American to being more Brazilian.

The first missionaries to visit Rio de Janeiro and evaluate its potential for the Church wrote, "someday it will be a fine field."⁴⁴ That simple statement would prove to be quite prophetic. As we examine this history, we will see the incredible harvest enjoyed by the Church and its missionaries in that area. We will see that the harvest started slowly, focusing largely on creating an American-centric Church in Rio. Then, as the Church in the city became more Brazilian, the fruits came much more rapidly in that "fine field."

⁴² For example, the manner in which the Church leaders were to conduct sacrament meetings, while not a core doctrine of the Church, remained relatively consistent throughout the course of the Church in Brazil. [William Grant Bangertter, *These Things I Know: The Autobiography of William Grant Bangertter* (Salt Lake City, UT: Voices and Images and Provo, UT: BYU Print Services, 2013), 220]

⁴³ A simple example of this evolution from the Church in Rio de Janeiro being culturally American to Brazilian is the social gatherings in the local branches of the Church. During the late 1950s, the Tijuca Branch, the first branch of the Church in Rio, hosted a Halloween costume party in celebration of an American holiday. [João Antônio Dias, interview by Elder Norberto and Sister Rosângela Lopes, August to September 2010, transcript, p. 25, in Brazil Area Historical Record of the Church in Rio de Janeiro, Folder 1, Church History Library (hereafter cited as "Brazil Area Historical Record of the Church in Rio de Janeiro")] Approximately a decade later, the same branch held a barbecue during the Brazilian holiday "Carnaval." [Tijuca Branch Manuscript History and Historical Reports, 1965-1984, Report Submitted December 31, 1966, February 20, 1966, Church History Library (hereafter cited as "Manuscript History of the Tijuca Branch")] While these two simple events are not significant in and of themselves, they represent the shift from a culturally American Church to a more culturally Brazilian one in Rio de Janeiro.

⁴⁴ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, February 28, and March 23, 1939, p. 531-532.

Chapter 2

Initial Establishment of the Church (1935-45)

Elder Melvin J. Ballard, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, felt the gentle rocking motion of the SS Voltaire as it swayed with the waves on its way to South America. He had been working on a letter to his wife, writing various portions of it “day to day on the boat.” On November 24, 1925, he wrote: “I got the spirit of it and wrote a prayer that we hope to offer in dedicating the land for the preaching of the gospel. Will send you a copy later.” Then, sensing the magnitude of the upcoming event, he wrote: “I am writing these . . . notes thinking it will be interesting and if you keep this letter it will be part of my history.”⁴⁵

On November 30th, Elder Ballard recorded that the ship arrived in Rio de Janeiro the night before, amid a great storm. He then commented on the beauty of the area saying, “this is supposed to be the grandest harbor in the world and it looks it.” Almost one month later in Buenos Aires’ *Tres de Febrero* park, Elder Ballard dedicated the nations of South America for missionary work. Among other things, his prayer included the following:

And now, oh, Father, by authority of the blessing and appointment by the President of the Church, and by the authority of the holy apostleship which I have, I turn the key, unlock, and open the door for the preaching of the Gospel in all these South American nations, and do rebuke and command to be stayed every power that would oppose the preaching of the Gospel in these lands; and we do bless and dedicate these nations of this land for the preaching of thy Gospel. And we do all this that salvation may come to all men, and that thy name may be honored and glorified in this part of the land of Zion.⁴⁶

Though this was just one man’s prayer in an obscure park in a South American country—a country that most members of the Church would never visit—nevertheless, this simple event signaled the beginning of an important shift in the missionary focus of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

⁴⁵ Melvin J. Ballard Letter to Martha J. Ballard, November 20-30, 1925, Church History Library.

⁴⁶ Melvin J. Ballard, *Crusader for Righteousness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 81.

This prayer was the beginning of the Church's organized efforts in South America and it officially opened the South American Mission headquartered in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Ten years later, in 1935, the Church opened the first mission specifically in Brazil.⁴⁷ Though Church growth in Brazil started very slowly, membership eventually grew at a startling rate. Now, in the approximately eighty years since the opening of the Brazilian Mission, the Church in Brazil has grown to approximately 1.3 million members and nearly two thousand congregations.⁴⁸

The Church was organized in 1830 and the first Church members arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Shortly after the Church migrated to the Great Basin region, Apostle Parley P. Pratt journeyed to South America in an attempt to establish the Church on that continent. He arrived in Chile in November of 1851 and immediately worked to learn the language and preach the gospel to the people. He ultimately decided that "the Book of Mormon and some cheap publications should be translated into Spanish and printed, and then the key [would] be turned to these nations." After five fruitless months, he returned to the United States.⁴⁹

The Church then entered a phase where South America was largely forgotten. The Church's central focus was on surviving and then thriving in the inter-mountain West. The foreign mission focus was primarily centered in Europe. The vast majority of the early Saints were of European ancestry, so Europe seemed closer to their way of life and certainly closer to their family heritage. Meanwhile, South America waited.

Then, in 1925, the Church sent another official representative, Elder Melvin J. Ballard, to South America to open the work on that continent. Ten years after Elder Ballard arrived in South

⁴⁷ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, May 15, 1935. Portions of this original source are in Portuguese. All the Portuguese sources in this paper are quoted in English.

⁴⁸ Mormon Newsroom, "Facts and Statistics: Brazil," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/facts-and-statistics/country/brazil> (accessed June 26, 2015).

⁴⁹ Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt, Son (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1985), 369-372.

America, the Church called Rulon S. Howells to open the Brazilian Mission. President Howells arrived in Brazil on May 15, 1935. He stayed a few days in Rio de Janeiro before continuing on to São Paulo, where he established the mission headquarters. A few years later, on August 14, 1939, two young missionaries, Elders Robert J. Conrad and Lucius L. Gardener, left for Rio de Janeiro to open the work there.⁵⁰ Even before Elders arrived, however, Rio de Janeiro—through the efforts of an individual member named Daniel Shupe—was already playing an important role in the history of the Church in Brazil.

In this chapter we will examine the first period of the history of the Church in Rio de Janeiro; the initial establishment of the Church. We will discuss the contributions of Daniel Shupe, and then examine the efforts of the early missionaries to open up missionary work in the city—as well as the struggles the Church encountered as it and the world were forced to adapt during World War II. This chapter chronicles the events of a Church leaving behind its German language and identity, while struggling to become Brazilian at the same time that it clung to its American nature.

Daniel G. Shupe and the Portuguese Translation of The Book of Mormon

Any meaningful discussion of the history of the Church in Rio de Janeiro must necessarily begin with the life of Daniel G. Shupe. An American, reared in Ogden, Utah during the early 1900s, Shupe served a mission to the French-speaking zone of Switzerland. After his mission he was working in Washington, D.C. when the State Department offered him a job stationed in Rio.⁵¹ Shupe went to Rio de Janeiro in the late 1920s, and lived there for several years before returning to the United States during World War II. While in Rio, Shupe married a

⁵⁰ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, August 14, 1939, 524.

⁵¹ Daniel G. Shupe, interview by Gordon Irving, Ogden, UT, February 22, 1973, transcript, p. 31-34, Church History Library.

Brazilian woman named Agda Soares Vieira.⁵² She and many of her family members were school teachers and her father worked for the city government. She and her mother, Dona Maria, spoke some English and, though they were not members of the Church, they supported Shupe's devotion to his Church.⁵³

When Shupe arrived in Brazil, he carried with him a letter indicating that another member of the Church was already living in Rio de Janeiro. Ethel Crago was an Englishwoman whose father was a mining expert for the biggest gold mine in Brazil. She had converted in England and came to Brazil with her father, who was not a member of the Church. Shupe went to see her several times, and they held small informal Church meetings together. However, she was focused on getting to Salt Lake City and, after a short while, moved there. Shupe later remembered: "Ethel was the only member I could find in Brazil."⁵⁴ Though she did not stay long in the city, Ethel Crago was the first known member of the Church living in Rio. Though he was the lone member of the Church in Rio during most of his time there, Shupe remained steadfast and faithful, ultimately doing a great work for his Church.

In 1932, before the Church had opened the Brazilian Mission, Shupe met with President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., who was visiting the nation on a special government assignment. President Clark told Shupe that for quite some time Church leaders had been wondering about starting a mission in Brazil. He explained that one of the reasons they were hesitant about doing so was because of the "mixed blood" of many Brazilians. Concerned, President Clark explained: "we know there's so much mixed blood we rather hesitate to open it up because there's going to be a problem about the priesthood." The discussion ended with President Clark telling Shupe that the

⁵² Agda Soares Vieira went by the name of Guida.

⁵³ Shupe, interview, 33-34.

⁵⁴ Shupe, interview, 33.

Church leaders were going to talk about it more when he returned to the United States.⁵⁵ This hesitancy and anxiety concerning how to navigate the difficulties caused by the priesthood restriction in such a racially diverse region was a consistent theme throughout the early history of the Church in the area, and it was a factor that stunted its growth for nearly four decades.

It was a full three years later that Shupe received a letter from Salt Lake City indicating that Rulon Howells and his family would soon arrive in Brazil to open the Brazilian Mission. When President Howells arrived, his first order of business was deciding the location of the mission headquarters. In some ways, the most logical place to establish the mission headquarters would have been Rio de Janeiro, since it was the capital city of Brazil. Howells even first mentioned Rio when describing his call, as if it was the first place that came to his mind.⁵⁶

After touring several places in Brazil, however, Howells ultimately chose São Paulo over Rio de Janeiro. He gave the following reasons for his choice.

First, it was the railroad center so I could reach into farther parts of Brazil quicker and easier than from Rio. Second, it was elevated on a higher plateau, which had a better climate than Rio, which was right on the coast. And Rio was more a political center and more of a resort city while São Paulo was industrial where the working classes maybe could be reached better. So I chose São Paulo and wrote a letter to the First Presidency mentioning that São Paulo would be, as far as we were concerned, the new mission headquarters. Long afterwards President McKay said to me, 'I've often wondered why you chose São Paulo rather than Rio.' He's been there in the meantime after we were released the second time. He said, 'I've often wondered why you chose São Paulo. After having been there, now I know why.'⁵⁷

This simple decision by President Howells, and validated by President McKay, established Rio de Janeiro as an afterthought for the Church in Brazil, headquartering the Church on the economic center of Brazil, rather than on the country's cultural center.

⁵⁵ Shupe, interview, 32.

⁵⁶ Shupe, interview, 32; Howells, interview, 17.

⁵⁷ Howells interview, 19-20.

This decision also meant that during most of Shupe's time in Rio de Janeiro—before returning to the United States during the war—there was no real Church presence in the city. Shupe, however, was still able to make an impact. His most significant contribution was translating the Book of Mormon into Portuguese. This would facilitate the Brazilian Mission's effort to switch from German to Portuguese.

The Brazilian Mission had begun as a German-speaking mission, geographically and linguistically limited to the German-speaking people concentrated in southern Brazil. Howells explained the decision to switch to Portuguese saying, “we realized that the country was a Portuguese-speaking nation and . . . that German was only a small part of the whole Brazilian life and people. Eventually our work *had to be* in Portuguese.”⁵⁸ Hence, a few years after President Howells arrived in Brazil, he assigned the first few missionaries to learn and proselyte in Portuguese.

In April of 1938, when President Howells first initiated the switch, the work in Portuguese was limited to only four elders in São Paulo.⁵⁹ These were not native Portuguese speakers, but missionaries whom Howells had assigned to learn Portuguese. Shortly after missionary work in Portuguese began, however, President J. Alden Bowers succeeded President Howells as Mission President over the Brazilian Mission, and with that he assumed the burden of switching the mission to a Portuguese speaking mission.⁶⁰ Significantly, in December of 1938, when President Bowers was only three months into his tenure, the Brazilian government banned

⁵⁸ Howells, interview, 42-43. Emphasis added. President Howells also explained that the decision to switch the mission language was entirely his, with no input or direction from Church headquarters in Salt Lake City.

⁵⁹ Frederick Salem Williams and Frederick G. Williams, *From Acorn to Oak Tree*, 334; Lucius L. Gardener, interview by Ronald A. Young, Orem, UT, December 15, 2010, no transcript available, Church History Library.

⁶⁰ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, “General Mission Statistics,” September 29, 1938, 544. That day's entry records that President Howells and his wife returned that day from picking up President Bowers and his wife from their boat in Rio de Janeiro.

all public meetings “in any language except Portuguese.”⁶¹ This new law forced President Bowers to essentially shut down the mission for seven months and to direct all missionaries to both learn Portuguese and also help in the production of Portuguese-language Church materials so that proselyting could resume.

During these few months, the government only allowed small non-Portuguese meetings in people’s homes with the missionaries and one or two families. President Bowers rushed the translation of materials into Portuguese and, after seven months, he “re-opened” the mission. As of 1939, missionaries in the Brazilian Mission spoke, worked, and proselyted in Portuguese.⁶² Until that point, the Church in Brazil had been more German than Brazilian. The difficult but necessary process of transitioning from a German to a Portuguese-speaking mission put the Church in Brazil on a path that could ultimately lead to great growth throughout the country, including its expansion into Rio de Janeiro.⁶³

The missionaries, many of whom had already learned German, now faced the challenge of learning Portuguese as quickly as possible without any formal training.⁶⁴ Elder William Grant

⁶¹ John A. Bowers, interview by Gordon Irving, Salt Lake City, UT, April 25, 1974, transcript, p. 29-30, Church History Library. In an effort to maintain political neutrality as tensions between nations increased before World War II, the Brazilian government, controlled by the dictator Getúlio Vargas, decided to forbid any public meetings not conducted in Portuguese.

⁶² Bowers, interview, 44-46. President Bowers went to the government officials and explained the situation. They informed him that they would allow them to have meetings with the opening and closing prayer in Portuguese and the bulk of the preaching in Portuguese, but they allowed the Church to have one talk in German. President Bowers said his philosophy was to “do as much as the authorities will let us do in German, but push the Portuguese and try to integrate the German people into the Portuguese Church.” [Bowers, interview, 46]

⁶³ The final step in changing the focus of the mission from German to Portuguese came a few years later under the tenure of President William W. Seegmiller. After some Germans in Brazil were persecuted, Seegmiller desired to show the Church’s complete divorce from its German roots in Brazil and its total loyalty to the Brazilian government. He decided to “gather up the German tracts, pamphlets, and songbooks and burn them.” Asael Sorensen, who was serving a Brazilian mission at the time, described how difficult that was for the German members, saying: “that was like tearing part of the soul out of the German saints.” [Sorensen, interview, 9-12]

⁶⁴ Though Portuguese would have been relatively easier than German, the challenge would be learning Portuguese as quickly as possible, and without any formal Portuguese training. Elder Lucius L.

Bangerter described this change. He had arrived as part of the first group of new missionaries called to Brazil and assigned directly to speak Portuguese. He said: “During the day we went to the mission home to begin our study of Portuguese, and in the evenings we sometimes accompanied other elders on visits to member families, group parties, and meetings.” During this transitional period, because many missionaries were still more confident in German, they would try to teach German-speaking people in their homes, even though the public meetings were in Portuguese.⁶⁵ It was a difficult time for the Brazilian Mission but, fortunately, President Howells had anticipated that the switch to Portuguese needed to happen and so he had taken steps toward that end—even before the Brazilian government had mandated it. Long before the governmental restrictions regarding language, he had spoken with Shupe, his wife, and others regarding the Portuguese translation of the Book of Mormon

In the LDS faith, it is nearly impossible to do missionary work without the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon contains a prophecy that it will work with the Bible “unto the confounding of false doctrines and ... establishing peace ... and bringing [people] to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of [God’s] covenants” (2 Nephi 3:12). The book contains a promise that if people engage in a serious study of the book and “ask God . . . with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ,” if the book is truly the word of God, then “he will manifest the truth of it unto you by the power of the Holy Ghost” (Moroni 10:4). Then, if people gain this testimony of the Book of Mormon, they will also know that Jesus Christ is their Savior, that Joseph Smith was truly a prophet of God, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is God’s true Church.⁶⁶

Gardener, one of the first four missionaries to make the switch, said that without any formal language training, they simply learned Portuguese by “absorbing” it. [Gardener, interview]

⁶⁵ Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 42.

⁶⁶ Introduction to the Book of Mormon (1981 edition and later).

Hence, when the Brazilian Mission transitioned from German to Portuguese, the most important material they needed translated into Portuguese was the Book of Mormon. If, however, the Mission had started translating the Book of Mormon into Portuguese at the time the mission was shut down, it would have taken several years before it was completed. As it was, President Howells had begun looking for competent help in translating the Book of Mormon years before. He found that help in Daniel Shupe.



Shupe (right) posing with his wife (middle) and father-in-law (left) in Rio de Janeiro, [Photographs (1922-1939), Daniel Gay Shupe, Church History Library].

Some time after President Howells arrived in Brazil, he met Shupe's Brazilian wife, Guida, and mother-in-law, Dona Maria.⁶⁷ They were both school teachers in Rio, and between the two of them, had competencies in English, French, and Spanish. Neither were members of the Church, but approved of the way Shupe lived.⁶⁸ Upon meeting these two women, and having

⁶⁷ Neither Howells's nor Shupe's histories record the exact date of this meeting, or the date of Howells' request that Shupe and his family translate the Book of Mormon.

⁶⁸ Shupe, interview, 38, 40, 44. Shupe hoped that, if they ever went back to the States, his wife would be baptized. Unfortunately, he and his wife divorced after their translation was finished and before he moved back home. Shupe said: "Up until about the time that we broke up, there hadn't been any missionaries down there. There wasn't anything they could see—they couldn't see the results of Mormon

previously met Shupe (and being impressed by them all), President Howells decided to ask them to translate the Book of Mormon from English into Portuguese. Shupe and his family discussed it and replied that they “would gladly do it.”⁶⁹ When asked why his wife and mother-in-law would work so long and hard on a project for a Church to which they did not belong, his response was that “although they were not apparently fully convinced that the gospel was true, they figured I was doing a good thing.” He continued: “I think . . . [my wife] knew that I had an assignment to do it and she approved of my mode of living over a lot of other people down there and she figured, ‘Well, it must be doing him a lot of good.’”⁷⁰

In an effort to assure that the Book of Mormon was not limited to the Rio de Janeiro dialect, President Howells also asked another translator in São Paulo, a Brazilian named Williams Lane (who was not a member of the Church), to complete a separate translation. In the end, President Howells employed Mario Pedroso (a retired Brazilian journalist with proficiency in English) to oversee the work, comparing and combining the two translations; Shupe’s from Rio and Lane’s from São Paulo. The finished product generally favored Shupe’s version, especially with regard to “interpreting doctrine.”⁷¹

In his oral history, Shupe described the translation process. He, his wife, and his mother-in-law, would work on it almost every night in their Rio de Janeiro apartment. Shupe would use

religion except in the way I lived.” [Shupe, interview, 38] President Howells remembered: “Dan Shupe and his wife were kind of drawing farther apart and I thought this might help them in their domestic relations as well as getting the book in the Portuguese language. Oddly enough they did hold together long enough to do the translation after which they separated. Then he was divorced later.” [Howells, interview, 24]

⁶⁹ Howells, interview, 23. Shupe had already done some work for Howells, translating some tracts into Portuguese. He also had some experience translating newspaper articles from Portuguese into English at his place of employment. He had not, however, done anything of this magnitude. President Howells offered to pay Shupe, but Shupe refused. President Howells put that money into the tithing fund of the Church instead. [Shupe, interview, 35, 37-38]

⁷⁰ Shupe, interview, 40, 44.

⁷¹ Howells, interview, 24-26; President J. Alden Bowers, “The Portuguese Edition of the Book of Mormon,” *The Brasilonian*, 5, no. 2 (April 1940): 25, 30.

a French version and Spanish version as guides, translate a portion, and then ask his wife and mother-in-law if it sounded like their language. He remembered that “they’d change a few words in the construction and so on. The meaning itself they’d usually not try to change.”

Shupe and his family would translate one sentence at a time, trying to make it as close to the English version as possible. Since they did not have a typewriter, they wrote out the entire manuscript in longhand. When they had a question or a difficult word or concept, Shupe would consult the French and Spanish versions. Occasionally, Shupe would have a difficult time trying to explain a doctrinal concept to Guida and Dona Maria. Shupe said the most challenging concept for them to understand was the Godhead. He said he had to repeatedly teach them “that they were three separate beings” and remind them “that’s the way [we] want to translate it.” He recalled that the most difficult part of the whole process was having the Spirit with him. He said: “I had to do a lot of praying about it at night.” Occasionally, he even had to wait until the next morning before he could get into the proper spirit.⁷²

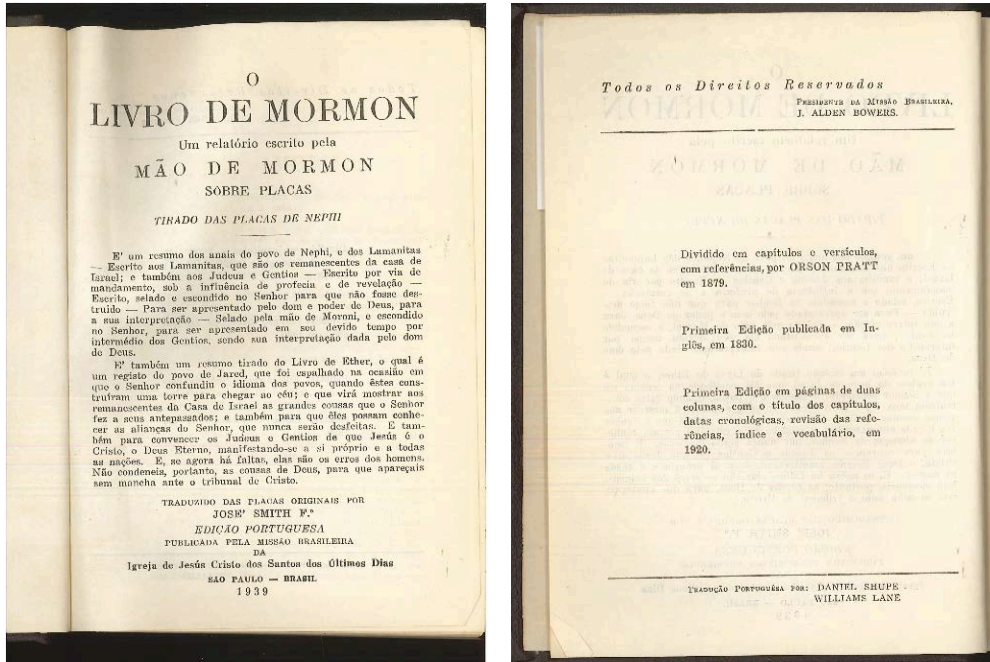
Altogether, Shupe and his family took two full years to translate and submit the final portion of the manuscript to President Howells. After turning in the manuscript, Shupe’s portion of the translation process was finished. Shupe, living in Rio, was not involved in the editing process to prepare the manuscript for printing.⁷³ The book was eventually published in São Paulo, but it took quite some time. The first few editions weren’t printed until late 1939, when President Bowers had become mission president. The missionaries in Rio did not receive their copies of the Book of Mormon until the spring of 1940.⁷⁴ On the copyright page of the first

⁷² Shupe, interview, 38-42.

⁷³ Shupe, interview, 44-47. In the mission publication, *The Brasilonian*, President Bowers described in detail the process of preparing the manuscript for printing and then preparing other portions, such as the index and footnotes in the mission publication *The Brasilonian*. [See “The Portuguese Edition of the Book of Mormon,” (April 1940): 25, 30] The missionaries also assisted in this work.

⁷⁴ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, March 27, 1940, 501.

edition of the Portuguese Book of Mormon (*O Livro de Mórmon*), both Shupe and Lane were listed as translators, but neither Shupe's wife, his mother-in-law, nor Mr. Pedroso were listed.⁷⁵



The title page and copyright page of the first Portuguese edition of the Book of Mormon. In the bottom the right-hand corner, Daniel Shupe and Williams Lane are listed as the translators [*O Livro De Mórmon*, 1939].

When Shupe returned to the United States in 1940, he brought with him a copy of *O Livro de Mórmon*. He took it to the office of President Heber J. Grant, President of the Church at the time, and presented it to him. President Grant congratulated him and told him he'd done a lot for the Church.⁷⁶ While there have been several subsequent editions of the Book of Mormon in Portuguese, this first edition was vital in helping the Brazilian Church's transition from being linguistically and culturally German to being more linguistically Brazilian; though it still remained culturally very American. Now that the mission was finally speaking the native

⁷⁵ *O Livro de Mórmon*, trans. Daniel Shupe and Williams Lane, (Sao Paulo: Missao Brasileira, 1939 and Empresa Grafica da "Revista dos Tribunais", 1940), Church History Library. Shupe did not know why his former wife and mother-in-law were not listed as translators. [Shupe, interview, 48]

⁷⁶ Shupe, interview, 49. Shupe's cousin was George Albert Smith, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and it was he that introduced Shupe to President Grant.

language of the country, it could expand into the more northern areas of Brazil, including Rio de Janeiro.

Missionaries Arrive in Rio de Janeiro

This expansion began in the early part of 1939. On February 28th, Elders Barton and Merrill “left São Paulo for Rio de Janeiro... to hunt out the German speaking people and find out where they were located and how many...[so they could] teach them the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” They worked in Rio for a few weeks, “contacting the Saints” there and “investigating as to how many Germans live in an around Rio,” but did not have much success. They left Rio de Janeiro to return to São Paulo on March 22nd, and wrote their evaluation of the city and its potential for the Church, “this particular part of Brazil is very beautiful . . . and some day it will be a fine field for the Portuguese speaking Elders.”⁷⁷

Several months later, President Bowers decided to officially open the area and send Portuguese-speaking elders. He said Rio de Janeiro “was at that time larger than São Paulo, so it was logical to extend the missionary work there.”⁷⁸ On August 14, 1939, Elders Robert J. Conrad and Lucius L. Gardener left São Paulo for Rio to begin missionary work there.⁷⁹ In an oral history interview given later in his life, Gardener remembered the experience saying: “We hadn’t had any missionaries in Rio. We went up there and started tracting . . .” They simply chose the Tijuca *bairro* of the city to start work there.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, February 28, and March 23, 1939, 531-32.

⁷⁸ Bowers, interview, 50.

⁷⁹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, August 14, 1939, 524.

⁸⁰ Gardener, interview. Tracting is the process by which missionaries simply move from home to home, attempting to contact people in order to teach them their gospel message.

The work began very slowly for the Rio de Janeiro missionaries. They held their first Sunday School meeting on December 3rd, with only Daniel Shupe in attendance.⁸¹ Then, due to the escalating conflict in Europe (as World War II approached), the Church pulled the missionaries out of Europe and assigned them to other areas of the world, which led to an increase in the number of missionaries in Brazil. Hence, despite the slow progress in the city, President Bowers sent them more missionaries so that, by the end of February 1940, they had eight missionaries serving in the city.⁸²



Shupe posing with the missionaries in Rio de Janeiro in December of 1939.
Left to Right: Elders Conrad, Neering, Gardener, Taylor, and then Daniel Shupe
[Photographs, Shupe, Church History Library].

President Bowers commented on the typical process of opening a new area for the missionaries to labor. He said the factors that influenced their decision to open an area were “mainly a matter of opportunities, by virtue of size. We took the larger places first where we

⁸¹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, December 3, 1939, 509.

⁸² Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, November 27, December 14, 1939, and February 17, 1940. A new companionship of missionaries arrived in Rio on each of these dates.

could put missionaries and expect that they could be there for some time.” When missionaries first arrived in a new city, they would first register with the local police. Often they would also join an athletic club, try to start English classes for club members, and work toward holding prayer and gospel meetings with them as well. President Bowers said, “when we started in Portuguese work, we started by making friends. English classes were started, which we would convert into Mutuals, and then we would hire a branch hall, proselyte and gradually convert our group activities into a Church type meeting. We made the auxiliary the Church.”⁸³

This process illustrates the lack of a Brazilian mindset by the mission president and, consequently, his missionaries. These proselyting techniques emphasize the American identity of the Church through teaching English classes, playing basketball at athletic clubs, and holding social activities run by American missionaries. Rather than simply focusing on the universal doctrines of the Church and drawing people to the Church through those doctrines, the missionaries tried to attract people to the Church by emphasizing its American-ness. While that did draw some to Church meetings and activities, very few people were baptized during this time, and the Church grew at a very slow pace.

The missionaries in Rio reported the various techniques they used to share their message. First, their main method of finding people to teach was through tracting. Elder Wayne Johnson, a young missionary at the time, recalled, “the first thing we did was, of course, tracting. ... you would clap your hands in front of the house and somebody would come out.”⁸⁴ Elder William

⁸³ Bowers, interview, 49-52. Elder Asael Sorensen, a young missionary at the time, also recalled that the missionaries were encouraged to use English classes and athletic club memberships to make social contacts with people that hopefully led to gospel teaching opportunities. [Sorensen, interview, 18-19]

⁸⁴ Wayne Johnson, interview by Mark Grover, Holladay, UT, August 14, 2006, transcript, p. 9, Mormonism in Brazil: Oral History Project.

Grant Bangerter also remembered simply “going out and knocking on doors.”⁸⁵ Once the residents opened the door, the missionaries tried to convince them to allow them inside to teach them. Lloyd Hicken, remembering what those experiences were like, said, “we had no instruction about door approaches. Each missionary pair would do their own approach, so it was not structured.”⁸⁶ Several of the young elders who served at this time, and then also returned and served other missions in Brazil, felt that the missionary practices in these early years were ineffective ways to spread the gospel and build the Church.⁸⁷

As noted above, another method used by the missionaries in Rio was teaching English classes. They held their first English class on September 27th, 1939, even before they had held their first Sunday School meeting (December 3rd).⁸⁸ The purpose of the English classes was to create opportunities to share their gospel message. For example, in 1941, the missionaries threw a party largely for the English class students and their parents. There were nearly 100 people present and, at the party, they were able to give away the Book of Mormon.⁸⁹ The elders wrote that they “believe that this party did much good because many of our students parents were present and they were favorably impressed.”⁹⁰

The Brazil missionaries at this time also used mass media to let the greatest possible number of people know about their message.⁹¹ The missionaries in Rio utilized the newspapers. For example, on February 28, 1941, a local newspaper, *Diario da Noite* (Evening Journal),

⁸⁵ Bangerter, *These Things I Know*, 50.

⁸⁶ Hicken, interview, 17-18.

⁸⁷ See, for example, Sorensen, interview, 15; Bangerter, *These Things I Know*, 51; Wayne Beck, interview by Gordon Irving, Bountiful, UT, January 17, 24, and 31, 1974, transcript, p. 21, Church History Library.

⁸⁸ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, September 27, 1939, 518.

⁸⁹ It is unclear if they gave away one copy of the Book of Mormon or several copies.

⁹⁰ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, November 12, 1941.

⁹¹ For example, in some cities, including Porto Alegre, the elders used radio programs to spread the word. [see Sorensen, interview, 14-18]

contained an article entitled, “*Cremos na Coligação Literal de Israel e na Restauração das Dez Tribos*” (“We Believe in the Literal Gathering of Israel and in the Restoration of the Ten Tribes”). The elders commented that “it came about as the result of an interview that Elder Orme had with one of the reporters. All points of the article were not correct, but it was good publicity.”⁹² A few months later, the missionaries reported a similar experience with another newspaper article.⁹³ So, while these mass media methods were not ideal for teaching people their message, they were used as a way to achieve publicity for the Church, hopefully making people curious to learn more from the missionaries. In actuality, there is no indication that the newspaper articles either hurt or helped the growth of the Church in Rio.

Once the missionaries found someone willing to listen to them, they then needed to teach them. In the early years, before and during World War II, their teaching relied heavily on printed tracts. The first *folheto* (pamphlet) used was about the Joseph Smith story, and then each successive tract given to investigators was on a different gospel topic. Altogether, they had as many as a couple dozen tracts. The missionaries, however, could also create and translate their own tracts. Elder Gardener told of finding a Brazilian woman who could speak English who helped them translate tracts into Portuguese. He said: “we made friends with her. We’d go visit her, and I’d take a tract in English to her. And, with her limited ability in English, she would translate it. With me and my limited Portuguese... we would together translate a tract and send it to São Paulo to the Mission President and he’d get a bunch of them printed up. . . . We did several tracts like that.”⁹⁴

⁹² Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, February 28, 1941, 464.

⁹³ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, November 20, 1941, 438. Another missionary did an interview with a reporter that led to an article in the same newspaper. This time, the elders wrote that “although many facts [were] incorrectly stated, the publicity was in the whole quite favorable.”

⁹⁴ Gardener, interview.

Using these tracts, the missionaries would visit people and give them a pamphlet at each visit, teaching them a lesson based on that pamphlet's topic. They would then continue to bring tracts to these investigators, returning again and again "until [the investigators] wouldn't take them anymore."⁹⁵ The goal of all the missionaries' activities was to find people they could teach and, in those early days, when they taught the doctrines of the Church, they often taught using tracts.

On March 24, 1940, the Elders held the first cottage meeting in Rio de Janeiro.⁹⁶ Cottage meetings were small group meetings in the homes of a family, where the Elders taught investigators the Gospel. These often involved showing slides and explaining Church doctrine or history, and they were one of the primary means of teaching people the message the missionaries bore.⁹⁷ Elder Lloyd Hicken described what these teaching visits were like. He said: "We had . . . various slide shows. . . . We could make an appointment with someone who was friendly to us and have them invite their neighbors and friends, and then we would show them some of these slide projections . . . We talked to them about who we were."⁹⁸ The missionaries' teachings also included the correcting of people's false ideas about the Church and its core doctrines.⁹⁹

No matter how clear the teaching was, however, it was hard for the missionaries to teach about these Church doctrines and prophets without having the most significant missionary tool, the Book of Mormon, available to them. After working in Rio for several months, using only printed pamphlets, the first Portuguese copies of the Book of Mormon arrived on March 27, 1940. The missionaries' history records that "it was a time of rejoicing for the group of

⁹⁵ W. Johnson, interview, 13. In November of 1939, the missionaries sent a tract entitled "Life's Meaning" to São Paulo for printing. [Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, November 22, 1939, 509]

⁹⁶ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, March 24, 1940, 501.

⁹⁷ Stan Dunn, phone interview by the author, March, 15, 2015.

⁹⁸ Hicken, interview, 17-18.

⁹⁹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, January 30, 1942, 435.

missionaries.”¹⁰⁰ Because the number of available books was limited, the missionaries would leave copies of the Book of Mormon with people on loan and encourage them to read it. They would then return later and “see if they were interested in the book, and whether they would continue reading it.”¹⁰¹ Elder Keith Jones, however, was very creative in how he wanted the books distributed. He negotiated with three local bookstores to place books in their stores for sale so that both the store and the missionaries would receive a portion of the profit.¹⁰²

The missionaries used the Book of Mormon to help people become converted to Christ and believe in the prophet Joseph Smith and in their Church. Elder Asael Sorensen said: “the great converting pull has always been in the Joseph Smith story. Those that would accept the Joseph Smith story and would come through and continue to study would become converts to the Church.” This is why the Joseph Smith story was the first lesson they would teach people, and why the Book of Mormon was necessary in their proselyting work.¹⁰³

Unlike LDS missionaries later on, the missionaries of this era did not invite people to make and keep commitments such as reading the Book of Mormon and praying to know its truthfulness. Elder Sorensen said: “we were not committing them at all. Although we would encourage them.”¹⁰⁴ In many ways, these elders did not know how to help people along the path to baptism and Church membership. Elder Bangerter wrote: “we visited the other elders frequently, but no one seemed to know very much about doing solid missionary work.”¹⁰⁵ These factors and others led to having many people interested in the Church, listening to missionary lessons, and even attending Church meetings, but very few baptisms and almost no Church

¹⁰⁰ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, March 27, 1940, 501.

¹⁰¹ Hicken, interview, 18.

¹⁰² Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, November 6, 1941, 438.

¹⁰³ Sorensen, interview, 20; W. Johnson, interview, 13.

¹⁰⁴ Sorensen, interview, 20.

¹⁰⁵ Bangerter, *These Things I Know*, 51.

growth. People enjoyed listening to the missionaries or going to meetings, but did not choose to become members of the Church. This is also partly attributed to the strong cultural and familial ties to the Catholic Church during these early years.¹⁰⁶

During this era, the training the missionaries received before arriving in Brazil was very limited. The missionaries would report to Salt Lake City, where they would stay for a week in what was referred to as the “mission home.” During that week, the missionaries would go through the Salt Lake Temple. They also participated in classes taught by General Authorities and others. In these classes, they learned about doctrines such as “the Holy Ghost, the first principles of the gospel, the organization of the Church, . . . administration of the priesthood, and a brief history of the Church.”¹⁰⁷ They were not given any training in proselyting methods.¹⁰⁸ The missionaries learned those on their own once they arrived in Brazil and, as Elder Bangerter stated earlier, “no one seemed to know much” about how to do missionary work.¹⁰⁹

Not only did the missionaries have almost no training on proslyting practices, but they also faced several difficult challenges, some unique to this period and some not. First, the missionaries struggled to learn the language with very little language training. They received no language training during their week in Salt Lake, and were expected to learn it on their own once they arrived in Brazil.¹¹⁰ One missionary described his process of learning the language, saying, “I learned it by listening.” They bought Portuguese grammar materials, used whatever Church

¹⁰⁶ Sorensen remembered that many people told the missionaries: “I don’t want to be a member of your church because we belong to the Roman Catholic Church.” Others would say “they didn’t want to offend their grandparents or their parents and so on.” [Sorensen, interview, 20]

¹⁰⁷ Sorensen, interview, 5-6.

¹⁰⁸ Hicken, interview, 5-6.

¹⁰⁹ Bangerter, *These Things I Know*, 51.

¹¹⁰ Hicken, interview, 5-6.

materials were available in Portuguese, and were forced to teach themselves this brand new language.¹¹¹

Second, because there were no members of the Church in the city during this time, the missionaries were responsible for everything; all proselyting activities, all classes, all Sunday meetings, all social activities, and all the people in Rio. For example, when the Church meetings moved to a new location, it was the missionaries who decided the new location and prepared the chairs and other furnishings. Additionally, the missionaries were in charge of the picnic activities and parties for the people interested in the Church. Lastly, when the Mutual Improvement Association, the pre-cursor to the Young Mens and Young Womens programs of the Church, started in Rio, it was the missionaries that started it and led all of the activities.¹¹²

Another potential challenge the elders faced was the Church policy restricting men of black African descent from holding the priesthood. As stated earlier, the question of how to implement this policy in such a racially diverse region was a concern for Church leaders. President Howells met with President J. Reuben Clark before going down to Brazil to open the mission. In that meeting, President Clark said: “You know, I’m quite concerned over the problems that you will have with the Negro in Brazil, because they are so dominant.” President Clark had stopped for one day in Rio de Janeiro while on a diplomatic mission to South America. He told President Howells that when he disembarked from the boat, “all [he] could see there was black people.” President Clark went on, saying: “the problem you’ll have with the gospel and the Negro race—I don’t know what,”—President Clark paused and shook his head before continuing—“I don’t know what you’ll do.”¹¹³

¹¹¹ W. Johnson, interview, 10.

¹¹² Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, March 10-30, September 13, 1941, November 12, 1941, January 11-February 3, 1942.

¹¹³ Howells, interview, 19.

President Bowers explained the difficulty in applying the policy at this time. He said: “We immediately started to segregate the people we went to.” In other words, the priesthood ban immediately created a divide in the minds of the missionaries, the people they were teaching, and the people with whom they interacted; a divide that inherently limited their teaching pool.¹¹⁴ Elder Hicken said: “Ordinarily, we didn’t try to teach them and we didn’t baptize them at that time.”¹¹⁵ Records clearly indicate that there was no policy against baptizing those of black African descent, because some were baptized during this period. However, Elder Hicken’s statement illustrates the concerted effort to avoid teaching anyone that they perceived as black.

The challenge presented by the application of this priesthood restriction became more significant as the Church spread farther and farther north. Whereas southern Brazil had a heavy European influence, the more northern areas—because of their connection to slavery—had more of an African influence. Because slaves had made up a large portion of the population of Rio de Janeiro in colonial times, the city still had a high percentage of people of African descent.¹¹⁶ This presented a particularly difficult demographic situation for the missionaries. As President Clark had said, the black population of Rio de Janeiro was quite significant.

While President Clark’s concern regarding the implementation of this restriction in Rio de Janeiro and the rest of Brazil was justified, the records from this early time period do not

¹¹⁴ Bowers, interview, 54. Bowers recounted this story of a young black man who was baptized at the time: “We preached the gospel to a light-skinned Negro man who was very interested, and we felt that we were going to have a problem. But he was such a fine man that we kept on preaching the gospel to him. He readily accepted and was baptized. And when it became known among his Catholic friends they started to chide him about becoming a ‘Mormon’. It got so bad that he couldn’t take the persecution that his friends gave him, and his wife too. (The missionaries) wanted to know what to do. We told him that he’d have to do the best he could. He said he had a testimony of the gospel, but he just couldn’t stand the chiding any more. So we lost that man.” [Bowers, interview, 54]

¹¹⁵ Hicken, interview, 12-13.

¹¹⁶ Slaves had been used in the agricultural production of sugar cane and other products in Rio de Janeiro during the years before the 1888 abolition of slavery in Brazil. [See Fausto, *A Concise History of Brazil*, 35, 131, 146]

contain much controversy stemming from the issue. While the policy did limit their teaching pool in certain areas of Brazil, including Rio de Janeiro, the missionaries did not worry about its implementation as much as later ones would. They felt that with how small-scale the Church was during this era, it “wasn’t really the problem it became in later years.”¹¹⁷ So, while the priesthood restriction was a challenge for missionaries of the era, the missionaries and mission president reported that it was not a significant issue for them at this time.

Even with all these issues swirling in the minds of the missionaries, and with all the growing pains they endured as the work began in Brazil and in Rio de Janeiro, the Church was still able to achieve some success in the city in these early years. The missionaries reported great attendance at their English class lessons and social activities. The records indicate that they and their English students would occasionally hold parties and picnics.¹¹⁸ The purpose behind the English classes was to become acquainted with people to the point that they would feel comfortable learning about the Church. So, it is no coincidence, that as the missionaries had more and more positive experiences with their English students, attendance at their Sunday meetings also increased.

The Sunday meetings in Rio began with very little success but, then, showed great progress as time passed. In January of 1940, the missionaries held their first Sunday School meeting in Portuguese, but not because they had Brazilians in attendance. Rather, this was held merely “as a means of development of speech” because the missionaries were still trying to learn the language.¹¹⁹ However, approximately one year later, after apparently having reverted back to conducting their meetings in English, they “found it necessary to change the meetings to

¹¹⁷ Bowers, interview, 55; Hicken, interview, 12-13; W. Johnson, interview, 16.

¹¹⁸ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, August 4, 1941, and September 13, 1941.

¹¹⁹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, January 1, 1940, 509.

Portuguese as a good many of [their] friends were coming to the meeting who [were] not able to understand English.”¹²⁰ In other words, in 1940 the missionaries taught in Portuguese in order to help themselves learn the language. Then, in 1941 they taught in Portuguese because they had people investigating the Church who didn’t know English. This was a small but important signal that the Church was beginning to attract some limited attention in the city, and that it was moving toward a Brazilian, rather than an American, identity.

With the missionaries in Rio experiencing the success of their Sunday School class growing, they decided they now needed to rent a public hall for their meetings. The elders searched for and found a hall (at *Rua Carlos de Vasconcelos* 118) that they rented for \$250 a month.¹²¹ They then spent the next few weeks buying chairs and preparing the hall for meetings. Their efforts culminated in their first meeting in the new hall. They wrote: “evening meetings were started in the hall on *Rua Carlos da Vasconcelos*. This was quite a memorable occasion for the Elders of the Rio district. All friends were invited and although not all came, we did not have room enough for all of those that did come. Extra chairs were borrowed from the lady of the house and then we still had two friends standing in addition to the missionaries.” The missionaries also recorded information about the social make-up of some of their visitors that day. They wrote: “Among those who attended were an author, a lawyer, a general, a trained minister of the Lutheran church, and the Stuck family.”¹²² The missionaries recorded the specific attendance numbers of a meeting they held approximately a month later. Fourteen “friends”

¹²⁰ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, March 2, 1941, 464. The term “friends” referred to the people that were interested in the Church. In later years, these people became known as “investigators” because they were investigating the Church.

¹²¹ The Portuguese word “*rua*” means “street” in English.

¹²² Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, March 10-30, 1941.

attended the Sunday meetings.¹²³ It felt as though the Elders were finally experiencing some success as an increasing number of people began attending their Sunday meetings.

Rio de Janeiro also provided another unique opportunity and challenge. Because, at the time, Rio was the capital of Brazil, there was a large English-speaking population in the city. In fact, since the time the missionaries arrived in the city, several American Mormons had also moved there and were working at the United States Embassy. These American members made up the entire body of baptized members in the area during these early years. Because these were the primary contacts of the missionaries, the missionaries found themselves often proselyting in English to Americans living in Rio. The convenience of having so many English-speaking residents in Rio allowed the missionaries to preach in their own language and have a natural connection with other North Americans living in the city. So, the missionaries, who had earlier switched to holding meetings in Portuguese because of the demand created by an increasing number of Portuguese-speaking investigators, now created a separate English-language Sunday School class.

The missionaries began inviting their English-speaking investigators to the English Sunday School meetings. In fact, in August of 1941 they recorded: “the English Sunday School is proving nearly as successful as regular Portuguese meetings.”¹²⁴ Though this success was encouraging for the missionaries in Rio, it also meant that the missionaries spent much of their time and energy with these people that would not remain in Rio to build the Church in that city; time and energy that they could have spent proselyting to Brazilians. The missionaries focus on these non-permanent residents of Rio, who happen to be Americans, is another example of the Church in the city during this time needing to be more Brazilian.

¹²³ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, May 4, 1941, 462

¹²⁴ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, August 24, 1941, 439.

It was around this time that, as tensions increased in Europe, the number of missionaries in Brazil increased. As the European missions closed, their missionaries were re-assigned to other parts of the world. This influx of missionaries into Brazil prompted President Bowers to expand the mission into new areas, including Niterói, Rio de Janeiro's sister city across the bay. On December 5, 1940, three missionaries crossed the bay to begin working in Niterói. Four days later, Elders Hymas and Duckworth moved to Niterói to officially "open up new territory."¹²⁵ While the missionaries in Niterói did not experience much success, this was the first instance in a consistent trend where the Church would use Rio de Janeiro as a springboard from which to launch missionaries into new areas. In later years, this practice would become more and more frequent.¹²⁶

The increased number of missionaries helped them accomplish more than they had before. In September of 1940, the missionaries reported having success "in holding quite a number of slide lectures" in Méier, another neighborhood (*bairro*) of Rio. Their success with these meetings continued through 1941 and into 1942, as well.¹²⁷ Also, in January of 1942, the missionaries working in the Tijuca *bairro* of Rio implemented the youth program, the Mutual Improvement Association. Elder Dan Harrison was the original leader of the program and several Brazilians also became involved.¹²⁸ About a month after they formed the group, they held an opening social at the YMCA, with seventy-five people in attendance.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, December 5-9, 1940.

¹²⁶ Missionaries left Rio de Janeiro to open many other regions and cities. Some examples include Juiz de Fora and Belo Horizonte [Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-1957, October 16-19, 1955] as well as Petrópolis [Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-1957, January 10-15, 1957].

¹²⁷ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, September 1940, 484, December 17, 1941, 436, and January 8, 1942, 436.

¹²⁸ The missionaries in Rio organized the MIA in January of 1942, this time with great enthusiasm. They asked four local Brazilians—Doug Guimarães, Eunice Araujo, Lea Tandler, and Dona Ribeiro Fausta—to be involved in running the organization. Over the next several months, however, the

Lastly, on February 1, 1942, President Bowers visited Rio de Janeiro and presided over the first conference of the Church in that region. A conference is a potentially larger meeting than say, a Sunday worship service. Conferences are meetings where anyone in the entire region can attend, not just the people from one *bairro* of the city. This meant that all the missionaries and interested investigators in the surrounding area, including Niterói, were invited to attend a meeting with the Mission President. The day began warm but, by the time the conference began in the evening, a slow drizzly rain had begun to fall. The missionaries worried the weather would discourage people from attending but, despite the weather, there were forty people present at the meeting. When taking into account the fact that there were no local members at this time, and that the meeting was made up entirely of missionaries and their investigators, the fact that forty people attended a Sunday meeting is quite impressive. This meeting included talks from the mission president and other missionaries, as well as some fine musical numbers. After the meeting, the missionaries recorded: “we were all pleased with our conference results.”¹³⁰

The successes the Church experienced during these first few years in Rio de Janeiro culminated in the first baptisms in Rio on May 18, 1942. Baron and Baroness Ernest von Schmysin-Korff were baptized in the sea at the foot of the Gávea mountain. The elders recorded: “A short meeting was held after which Elders Norton Nixon and Sargent Rice performed the baptismal ceremonies. The sea was rather rough which made the baptism difficult, however, upon finishing, the Baron stated that it was the happiest day of his life. He expressed his testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel. He also expressed a desire to truly live the

missionaries only left record of scattered meetings, with the last one being in October. Shortly after that, the Church in Rio began struggling as the missionaries prepared to leave. [Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, January 11-25, 1942, 436 to October 26, 1942, 403]

¹²⁹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, January 11, 1942, 436, and February 3, 1942, 435.

¹³⁰ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, February 1, 1942, 435.

commandments of God.”¹³¹ After nearly three years of working and toiling in the city, the missionaries experienced their first baptismal success. They may have hoped that this was the beginning of a successful run of baptisms and conversions. Unfortunately, as World War II escalated, circumstances in Rio de Janeiro and in the Church begun to change.

The Missionaries Leave

On June 5, 1942, the missionaries in Méier recorded: “The [Méier] Branch of this district was closed today. We will continue visiting there but because of the fact that we have only six missionaries it is best to concentrate our work.” Less than a week later, the elders in the Niterói branch received word that “due to the decrease of the number of Elders in the Brazilian Mission ... the work in this district was to be discontinued... All the literature was taken over to the Rio de Janeiro district along with the other assets of the district. The Elders of that district also have a list of the most interested investigators, tracting books, maps, etc.” Which they gave to the missionaries serving in Rio.¹³²

In both of these instances, the missionaries referred to the limited or decreasing number of missionaries serving in the area. In 1941, as World War II continued to progress, the Church stopped sending new missionaries to South America. Consequently, as missionaries finished

¹³¹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, May 18, 1942, 417. The records are silent regarding what happened in the lives of the von-Schmusing-Korff's after their baptism. There is no mention of them in the history until their two young children were blessed in 1950. They apparently moved to Petrópolis, a distant suburb approximately forty miles away, nestled in the mountains outside of Rio. It may be that their lack of involvement in the Church after their baptism is because of this move to Petrópolis. Ultimately, they reconnected with the church and blessed their children before moving to the United States in September of 1951. [“Record of Members Collection: Microfilm Reels, Brazil, Part 1, 1954,” microfilm, Reel 662, Member Cards 44 and 45, Church History Library]

¹³² Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, “Rio de Janeiro District,” June 5, 1942, 406, “Niterói District”, June 11, 1942, 407. These “branches” and “districts” of missionaries in these passages should not be confused with more common uses of “branches” and “districts” that develops later referring to organizations of Church members and not of missionaries.

their missions, they were not replaced by any newly arriving missionaries.¹³³ The numbers of missionaries in the Brazilian Mission slowly dwindled to zero.¹³⁴

President Bowers dealt with this issue before being released in April of 1942. President Seegmiller, however, bore the brunt of the challenge of keeping Church branches running as missionaries were pulled out of the country.¹³⁵ In a letter to his adult son, dated February 19, 1943, President Seegmiller wrote: “In April, we shall send four missionaries home, in May ten, and so on . . . so it will not be long until Mother, Wan [his teenage son], and I are here alone.”¹³⁶ President Seegmiller was forced to close more and more areas of the mission as the number of missionaries shrank. Finally, in January of 1944, he wrote: “All the missionaries have returned home now and Mother and I are quite alone in this big house.”¹³⁷

As the number of missionaries was decreasing across the mission, the effects were felt by the Church in Rio. The missionaries recorded that the “numbers of missionaries in Rio de Janeiro district is shrinking, because the number of missionaries [in the mission] is going down. President Seegmiller says it will be necessary soon to close the district.”¹³⁸ As the number of missionaries in Rio diminished, not surprisingly, the attendance at Sunday meetings also diminished. The elders frequently wrote that they cancelled Church meetings because of zero

¹³³ *Church History in the Fulness of Times: Student Manual*, Prepared by the Church Educational System, (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003), 526. Missionaries had already evacuated from Europe and the Pacific. By 1944, regular proselyting was limited to North America and Hawaii.

¹³⁴ Grover, “Mormonism in Brazil,” 69. As the Church pulled missionaries out of Europe, they were reassigned to other missions, so the number of missionaries in Brazil initially increased. It wasn’t long, however, until all those new areas were closed as the number of missionaries declined.

¹³⁵ Diania Haycock Rex, interview by Mark Grover, St. George, UT, November 27, 2000, transcript, p. 8, Mormonism in Brazil: Oral History Project.

¹³⁶ William W. Seegmiller letter to his son, February 19, 1943, microfilm, William W. Seegmiller correspondence, 1926; 1939-1945, Church History Library.

¹³⁷ Seegmiller, letter to daughter-in-law, Bonnie, December 28, 1943, and letter to his son and daughter-in-law, January 28, 1944. Some missionaries chose to remain in Brazil for work, but most of these missionaries fell away from the Church, which greatly disappointed President Seegmiller. [See Williams and Williams, *Acorn to Oak Tree*, 315]

¹³⁸ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, April 9, 1943.

attendance. In January of 1943, they wrote: “the work has slipped considerably. We seem to do nothing. We have very few interested friends.”¹³⁹

Eventually, President Seegmiller decided the time had come to pull all missionaries out of Rio de Janeiro. So, in May of 1943, President Seegmiller visited Rio and met with the American returned missionaries who worked in the American Embassy and lived in Rio. President Seegmiller “suggested that the members in Rio de Janeiro be commissioned as regular missionaries after the two remaining Elders are taken out. All were in favor and it was definitely decided that they would be officially called by President Seegmiller as local missionaries, soon after the first of June.” The plan was for the local missionaries to continue working with the earnest investigators, and for the branch to continue under the direction of these local American members. Records indicate that “this independent branch organization will probably be the first one of its kind in the Brazilian Mission.”¹⁴⁰ In other words, this Rio de Janeiro Branch would be the first branch organized with resident members as the branch leaders, and without missionaries involved in any way.

So, on June 6, 1943, “a special meeting was called” where President Seegmiller accomplished two important tasks. First, he called a Branch Presidency made up entirely of local, albeit American, members. Lee Pierce Brady was called as Branch President, with Harold Rex and Daniel B. Harrison as his two counselors. Second, Sisters Diania Rex and Bernice Brady were called as local missionaries. President Seegmiller counseled them to continue sharing the gospel, continue having meetings, continue submitting the monthly reports, and more.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, January 11, 1943, 398.

¹⁴⁰ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, May 16, 1943, 392.

¹⁴¹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, June 6, 1943, 379.

It seems as though President Seegmiller hoped that the work in Rio would be able to continue as normal. For a time, it seemed as though President Seegmiller's hopes were coming true. In May of 1943, during this time of transition where the missionaries left the branch, Pierre Van Velthem was baptized into the Church by Elder Kenneth Boss. A few months later, Pierre was ordained a deacon by the Branch President, President Brady.¹⁴² This ordination is especially significant, because it is an indication that Pierre continued active in the Church for a time, and that the North American residents of Rio continued the missionary work after the missionaries were gone. Additionally, Eunice Guigon de Araujo had desired baptism in April of 1943, prior to the missionaries leaving, but she was not yet ready. However, in September of that year she too was baptized.¹⁴³ Altogether, the Church baptized four people in Rio during this early era before 1945. Records indicate that none of these four people remained actively involved in the Church after their baptisms, though some came back many years later.¹⁴⁴

Unfortunately, missionary work among Brazilians dwindled during this period because of the lack of full-time missionaries. The North Americans living in Rio called to continue the missionary work struggled to fulfill their callings. Sister Brady, the newly called local missionary and wife of the Branch President, recalled what the work was like during this difficult period. She explained that the government did not allow the Church in Rio to hold meetings in

¹⁴² Record of Members Collection, Brazil (Country), Part 1, Rio de Janeiro Branch, 1942-1951, Membership Record #3, microfilm, reel 662, Church History Library.

¹⁴³ Record of Members Collection, Rio de Janeiro Branch, 1942-1951, Membership Record #4.

¹⁴⁴ As stated in the previous footnote, Baron and Baroness Von Schmysing-Korf moved to Petrópolis and became uninvolved in the Church until 1951, when they moved to the United States. Pierre Van Velthem is not mentioned anywhere else on any available Church records. Shortly after her baptism, Eunice Guigon de Araujo became unemployed, which made her feel uncomfortable with the commandment of tithing and, consequently, the Church. Decades later, in 1983, she reconnected with the Church through Bishop Helvécio Martins, and returned to her former faith. [Eunice Guigon de Araujo, Personal Memoir, Church History Department, Church Office Building of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, São Paulo, SP, Brazil, digitized versions in the possession of Mark Grover; Helvécio Martins and Mark Grover, *The Autobiography of Elder Helvécio Martins* (Salt Lake City, UT: Aspen Books, 1994), 91-93]

the public hall. The missionaries were also restricted from certain proselyting activities such as tracting. Instead, the local missionaries would essentially socialize with people and mention Church doctrines to them in an attempt to pique their interest. She said that they “explained a lot of [their] doctrine to many people that [they] met.” They would tell people that they didn’t smoke or drink, that their Church was patterned after the original organization and with the original doctrine of the Church in Christ’s time, that their Church believed in the Bible, and more.¹⁴⁵ She also explained that since they couldn’t meet in a public hall, the few members that lived in Rio held Church meetings in Brother and Sister Brady’s home.¹⁴⁶

Though these North American member-missionaries were limited, they continued to try to share the gospel as much as they could. When asked if their missionary work was conducted mostly among other North Americans and people connected to the embassy, she replied that their missionary work was entirely focused on North Americans from the embassy and businesses nearby. She also remembered there being no local Brazilian members, except maybe one or two.¹⁴⁷ The meetings were mostly made up of the few North American members that lived in Rio, and possibly a couple of native Brazilians. There is no record of any baptisms during this period.

This lack of success among native Brazilians became especially evident when it came time to replace President Brady’s counselors in the Rio de Janeiro Branch Presidency. The two men called to fill this void were Samuel J. Skousen and Rolf Larson, two North American men “employed in the United States Embassy in Rio de Janeiro.”¹⁴⁸ Because there were no Brazilian

¹⁴⁵ Bernice N. Brady, interview by Frederick G. Williams, Salt Lake City, UT, August 25, 1973, microfilm, transcript, p. 12, Church History Library.

¹⁴⁶ Brady, interview, 9-10.

¹⁴⁷ Brady, interview, 8-9, 11-12.

¹⁴⁸ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, May 6, 1945, 368. While other North American Church members who remained in Brazil during the war did not continue in the Church, this

members available in the Rio Branch, these two North Americans were called. In one sense, the Church was fortunate that there were at least some members in Rio during this difficult time, because they allowed the local branch to remain open. On the other hand, though, if the Church in Rio had been more Brazilian and less American, there may have been some Brazilian men ready to assume this important responsibility. Instead, the Church in the city remained American.

In April of 1945, Harold Rex, the former counselor in the Rio de Janeiro Branch Presidency, returned to Brazil after only a short time back in the United States. He replaced President Seegmiller, and took the helm of the Brazilian Mission.¹⁴⁹ Though he arrived at a time when there were no missionaries in the mission, World War II shortly drew to a close and the Church once again began calling new missionaries to serve in Brazil.

After struggling for over two years to continue the work in Rio de Janeiro, Branch President Brady and his family left Rio de Janeiro and returned to the United States.¹⁵⁰ They succeeded in maintaining Sunday meetings and some missionary efforts during this difficult period during World War II. Because their efforts were focused on the North Americans, however, when they left Rio to return home after the war, the new missionaries in Rio were forced to start anew. These new missionaries then worked to help the Church re-establish itself in the city.

As our study of this time period draws to a close, it is important to reflect on how the Church started in Brazil. Missionaries started working in southern Brazil, speaking German, and proselyting to the very limited German population. In essence, it began as a German Church. Because of this German identity, the Church in Brazil was unable to expand in the more northern

small group remained very involved, and did their best to continue some semblance of the Church, most often working with their North American friends to share the gospel with them. [Williams, *From Acorn to Oak Tree*, 315]

¹⁴⁹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, May 4-10, 1945, 368.

¹⁵⁰ Brady, interview, 3.

areas of the country, which had a much less significant German-speaking population. In order for the Church to expand into Rio de Janeiro, it had to shift away from its German origins and become more Brazilian.

The switch to proselyting in the Portuguese language signalled that shift, and shortly thereafter the Church officially opened missionary work in Rio. Without the translation work of Daniel Shupe and the tireless efforts of President Bowers and the many full-time missionaries who transitioned missionary work in Brazil to the Portuguese language, the Church would have remained confined to a small region of the country, working with a meager percentage of the population. The switch to Portuguese-language proselyting allowed the Church to expand into Rio and, eventually, all of Brazil.

Once the Church arrived in Rio, however, it faced the challenge of growing in that city. While the Church in Brazil had shifted away from German, it did not become entirely Brazilian—particularly in Rio. In fact, it became largely American. Because of its status as the capital of Brazil, Rio de Janeiro had a high English-speaking population, and the missionaries spent much of their time working with English-speaking North Americans. While there is nothing wrong with the missionaries choosing to work with the English-speaking residents of Rio, it resulted in a lack of a strong Brazilian foundation. Hence, when the North Americans returned home, there was no one left to continue the work in Rio. Because of the Church's American and English-speaking identity in that part of Brazil, the limited success the missionaries did have (e.g., high attendance in meetings and their first baptisms) ceased when the missionaries and North Americans left. In the succeeding years and decades this tension between being American and Brazilian continued to affect growth in Rio de Janeiro.

Chapter 3

Reestablishment of the Church (1945-1958)

In setting him apart as mission president, President David O. McKay, Second Counselor in the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, laid his hands on the head of Harold Morgan Rex and blessed him with the power, ability, and wisdom that he would need to govern the work of the Church in Brazil. President McKay referred to President Rex's previous experience working in Brazil, saying: "You have heretofore labored among the Brazilian people, you know their needs, their natures, and their desires, particularly those who belong to the Church." He blessed him to use his natural abilities to help further missionary work with the Brazilians, especially those who were "honestly seeking to know the Truth."¹⁵¹

President McKay then blessed President Rex's efforts with the young missionaries which would be entrusted to his care. "Your special work will be with the missionaries who will be sent to you as soon as the way is open for them to go."¹⁵² President Rex arrived in Brazil on April 29, 1945 to take over as mission president of the Brazilian Mission. He was immediately in a unique position in the history of the Church. He had no missionaries in his mission. Though he had supervision over an entire country with a few hundred members, he had zero missionaries at his disposal to help him with his task. This interesting predicament, however, did not last long. A little over two weeks later, on May 15, 1945, three missionaries arrived in São Paulo, marking the first time the Brazilian Mission had young missionaries since they were removed from the

¹⁵¹ The History of Diania Haycock and Harold Morgan Rex, 1915-2005, "July 24, 1915-January 4, 1988: Harold Morgan Rex" Section, President McKay's Blessing, p. 1, "Diania H. And Harold M. Rex History and Scrapbooks" Collection, Church History Library.

¹⁵² History of Diania and Harold Rex, "Harold Rex" Section, p. 2-3.

country during World War II. According to the mission history, upon the return of full-time missionaries to Brazil, “there was much rejoicing throughout the mission.”¹⁵³

Over the next few years new missionaries were called to Brazil, and the number of missionaries in that country slowly grew. Altogether, approximately sixty elders arrived during President Rex’s four years as President over the Brazilian Mission.¹⁵⁴ As more missionaries arrived, President Rex assigned them to cities which had had missionaries before the war, essentially reopening missionary work in those areas and striving to strengthen the branches that had struggled during the war years. He reopened São Paulo in May of 1945, Campinas and Porto Alegre in July of 1946, and Joinville in October of the same year.¹⁵⁵

During this initial period, the Rio de Janeiro Branch continued to function under the direction of the North American members living in the city. When the missionaries were removed from Rio in June of 1943, Lee Pierce Brady was called as Branch President. After he served in that position for two years, his two counselors were released because they returned to the United States. Their replacements were Samuel J. Skousen and Rolf Larson. Over the course of the next two years the members in Rio were left to govern themselves with only an occasional visit from the mission president.¹⁵⁶

Because these North American members were not full-time missionaries, they could not give as much time and energy to the work of proselyting. Their limited missionary efforts were focused on their friends and acquaintances who were also North Americans.¹⁵⁷ There was apparently no Church growth during this period. The members in Rio, however, did find other

¹⁵³ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, April 29, 1945 and May 15, 1945.

¹⁵⁴ History of Diania and Harold Rex, “Harold Rex” Section, “Harold Morgan Rex: Life Sketch”.

¹⁵⁵ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, May 1945, July 1, 1946, and October 24, 1946.

¹⁵⁶ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, June 6, 1943, 379 and May 6, 1945, 368, and September 1946, 364.

¹⁵⁷ Brady, interview, 9-10.

ways to help missionary efforts in Brazil. For example, the members of the Branch Presidency gave financial support to Alfredo Lima Vaz, a young man from Campinas, who was the first Brazilian called to serve a full-time mission.¹⁵⁸

Their efforts, however, failed to build a foundation of local Brazilian members for the Church in the city.¹⁵⁹ So, when, in 1947, the missionaries returned to the city (at approximately the same time that the North Americans living there returned home), they were forced to essentially re-establish the Church in Rio de Janeiro. In this chapter we will examine this period of re-establishment, which extended from 1945 to 1958. We will first study the events that followed the return of the missionaries to Rio. Then we will examine the first attempts toward establishing Brazilian leadership over the members in the city. During this re-establishment era, we will see a Church struggling (at the end of World War II) through a transitional period from being almost completely American in its membership, language, and culture, to a more mixed identity (by the middle of 1958). It is in this period that the Church in Rio experienced its first real growth, and local Brazilians were baptized into the Church and remained active in the faith.

Missionaries Return to Rio de Janeiro

Over two years after the first missionaries returned to the Brazilian Mission, President Rex finally assigned two missionaries, Elders C. Elmo Turner and Milton R. Bloomquist, to re-open missionary work in Rio de Janeiro.¹⁶⁰ While President Rex did not explain his decision to wait so long, it is evidence of at least two things regarding the Church in the area. First, there were fewer members of the Church in Rio than other cities. Second, the missionaries had not

¹⁵⁸ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, January 1, 1946, 367.

¹⁵⁹ At one point there were only four members of the Church in Rio de Janeiro. [Gordon Irving, "Preliminary Compilation of the Numerical Strength of the LDS Church in Brazil, 1935-74," Historical Department of the Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, February 1976, p. 7, in the possession of Mark Grover]

¹⁶⁰ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, July 28-31, 1947, 357.

experienced as much success in Rio as in the other areas of Brazil before the missionaries evacuated. Rio de Janeiro, therefore, did not merit receiving missionaries before the other branches did. Lastly, the Church in the city had a base of English-speaking North Americans that gave the branch some self-sufficiency, which allowed the mission president to send a limited number of North American missionaries to other areas in greater need. This self-sufficient base, however, was entirely English-speaking, and was unable to grow the Church among native Portuguese-speaking Brazilians.

This base of English-speaking members dwindled to nothing, however, when the final North American branch leader left for the United States only a month after the full-time missionaries returned to Rio. The mission history records: “Brother Robert S. Sorenson, Branch President of the Rio de Janeiro Branch, left today for the United States. He turned over all books and records of the branch to Elder C. Elmo Turner.”¹⁶¹ This simple event is symbolic of an important transition for the Church in Rio; a transition away from proselyting North Americans, and toward proselyting local Brazilians. Now that the proselyting was done by full-time missionaries, rather than part-time missionaries, they had time to actively proselyte Brazilians in the city.

When the missionaries returned to Rio de Janeiro, they followed President Rex’s program for missionary work. Wayne Beck (who had served a mission in Brazil before World War II), along with his wife, were called to serve a mission together in Brazil during President Rex’s tenure. At one point, Elder Beck served as President Rex’s counselor in the mission presidency and had the responsibility to help train the missionaries. President Rex’s wife, Diania, explained, that these missionaries received no “missionary training of any kind” before they were sent out

¹⁶¹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, August 24, 1947, 357.

to their assigned areas.¹⁶² Instead, the missionaries taught themselves the Portuguese language and were trained by Elder Wayne Beck and other mission leaders on the missionary program and proselyting practices of that mission.

Elder Beck described the missionary work under President Rex, saying that they emphasized hard work and long hours, teaching the missionaries to leave their apartments at 7 am and only return at 10 pm, working as much as possible during their proselyting time. They were told to talk to people about the Church when they were at the cafe or the post office. Elder Beck trained them on “just how important it was to get around to the Book of Mormon and establish the purpose of your visit and start to make it profitable rather than beat the bushes so much.”¹⁶³ Elder Turner, who had been one of the first two missionaries to return to Rio after the war, remembered that all they had was “the Bible and the Book of Mormon... a testimony and strong legs ... [so they] did a lot of tracting.” He also stated that the “Book of Mormon was their best proselyting tool.”¹⁶⁴ Under this missionary program there was a primary focus on these traditional proselyting practices and teaching doctrines. This approach to missionary work changed with President Rex’s successor.

In 1949, less than two years after the missionaries returned to Rio de Janeiro, President Rulon S. Howells replaced President Rex as president of the Brazilian Mission. This was his second time serving as mission president in Brazil. He had been the mission president called to open the mission in 1935. While President Howells followed some traditional practices for

¹⁶² Rex, interview, 12-13.

¹⁶³ Beck, interview, 32.

¹⁶⁴ C. Elmo Turner, interview by Mark Grover, West Jordan, UT, April 16, 2001, transcript, p. 4, Mormonism in Brazil: Oral History Project.

spreading the gospel and establishing the Church, for the most part, his approach was very different from any mission president that came before or any that would follow after.¹⁶⁵

President Howells believed in the principle that publicity for the Church would create interest among Brazilians and, therefore, it was good for missionary work. Elder Weldon Jolley, one of the young missionaries that served under President Howells, said that his desire was for “the Church to become known” in Brazil.¹⁶⁶ So, the elders in Rio de Janeiro used radio programs and magazine articles as mass media avenues for sharing their missionary message with as many people as possible. For example, in May of 1952, the missionaries in Copacabana arranged for a five minute radio segment about the Church and the Book of Mormon to play on at least six radio stations throughout Rio de Janeiro. Then, one month later, a government radio station played four thirty-minute radio programs consisting of the music of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.¹⁶⁷

The missionaries in Rio de Janeiro also sought more publicity for the Church through articles published in Brazilian periodicals. The May 1952 edition of *Nação Brasileira (Brazilian Nation)* had “a page and a half article” about the Church, including a picture of the Book of Mormon. Later that same year the Brazilian magazine, *Ilustração Brasileira (Brazilian Illustration)*, included a two-page article about “the Miracle of the Seagulls,” where large flocks of seagulls saved Mormon pioneers’ crops from a plague of crickets.¹⁶⁸

President Howells also used some more creative means of garnering additional publicity. In November of 1949 he helped organize a tour of Brazil for the University of Utah basketball

¹⁶⁵ President Howells was similar to other mission presidents in that he believed in the importance of developing Brazilian leaders despite the struggle to find and develop Brazilian priesthood holders. [See Howells, interview, 66-69] However, as we will discuss shortly, most of his practices, were very different from other mission presidents.

¹⁶⁶ Weldon Jolley, phone interview by the author, March 14, 2015.

¹⁶⁷ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, May 8, and June 7, 1952, 46.

¹⁶⁸ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, June 1, and August 20, 1952, 10.

team, arranging for them to play local teams as they traveled throughout the country. He also formed a missionary octet to follow the team, singing at their games as well as on the local radio stations—including a station in Rio. In the summer of the following year he organized a similar tour for the Brigham Young University basketball team.¹⁶⁹

Elder Jolley, one of the missionaries in this octet that toured with the University of Utah team, said that, after the game, the elders in Rio “had contacts generated from the night of the game and from other events that happened at that particular time.”¹⁷⁰ The missionaries reported that “the whole undertaking of the basketball games and associated activities from every standpoint was very successful” in that it increased the public’s awareness of the Church.¹⁷¹ While it can be difficult to measure the success of publicity efforts, such as these basketball tours, the ultimate outcome the missionaries desired was the baptism of new members into the Church. There was, however, no noticeable increase in baptisms in Rio during or immediately following the basketball tours.¹⁷² This lack of converts to the Church indicates that though the tours may have generated some publicity toward the Church, they did not create any immediate success.

The most unique aspect of President Howells’ tenure at this time was his emphasis on developing the welfare program in Brazil. President Howells said: “I had been a bishop for ten years in the 18th Ward, Ensign Stake. The Church program was very strong on welfare during those years, individually as well as collectively . . . Well, that program had so impressed me, . . . that I thought in Brazil we should do likewise.” So, President Howells began an aggressive

¹⁶⁹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, November 2-17, 1949, 278-279 and June 30-July 9, 1950, 219-220.

¹⁷⁰ Jolley, interview.

¹⁷¹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, November 17, 1949.

¹⁷² While some baptisms occurred in the months after the basketball tours, it was no more than in previous months. In fact, 1950, the year that would have been most affected by the tours, was the lowest baptizing year in Rio during that era.

campaign to establish the welfare program in Brazil, training missionaries to help teach Brazilians about wheat supplies, weaving looms, molasses, and more.¹⁷³ In Rio, President Howells and his wife gave the missionaries and members a weaving loom and trained them to use it. They also trained them on how to make marmalade. In time, they returned to follow up with them on the Welfare program.¹⁷⁴

President Howells's attempts to grow the church, through the welfare plan and publicity efforts, reflected his North American roots. The missionaries were baking bread and taking it from house to house as a door opener, selling whole wheat and other food items in the Church, teaching people how to can food and use a weaving loom.¹⁷⁵ The focus tended to be on teaching people about the Welfare Program using distinctly North American foods and practices, rather than such Brazilian food items as rice and beans. While the Church did grow during this time, the consequence of such practices was the creation of a distinctly North American Church in Brazil. Instead of focusing on teaching and proselyting methods that would resonate with Brazilians, and instead of emphasizing the universality of gospel doctrines and principles, President Howells tried to gather people to the fledgling Church, by emphasizing American cultural practices and qualities.

Nowhere is this conflict over the Church's identity more profoundly evident than in the priesthood restriction against men of black African descent. This policy, developed during a racially segregated era in American history, was a difficult concept for most Brazilians to understand, and it created many challenges as the Church attempted to implement it in such an ethnically diverse society. Brazil has a racially mixed society that defines racial identity by a person's look and not by their blood heritage, as the Church policy at that time did. Hence, this

¹⁷³ Howells, interview, 58-59.

¹⁷⁴ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, September 3-10, 1949, 292.

¹⁷⁵ Sorensen, interview, 31-32.

policy created many challenges for Church members and missionaries as they tried to grow the Church in this country.

With no instruction from Salt Lake, President Howells attempted to navigate these difficult waters, continuing many of the previous policies and practices. He instructed his missionaries to try to avoid teaching black people “unless they come and insist on it.” To skirt possible awkward situations, President Howells instructed his missionaries that when they knock on a door and a black person answers, they should “ask a question as to where someone else lived” so they wouldn’t offend them, and then move on to a different door. In order to verify if someone was of European, rather than African descent, President Howells also created a rule that the elders should attempt to work with investigators to try to trace their “genealogy out of the country” before they were baptized.¹⁷⁶

President Howells remembered one instance where this policy directly affected a faithful and “dynamic member of the Church” in Rio de Janeiro. The Superintendent of the Sunday School did not have the priesthood, and the people in the branch began to wonder why, when he did such a good job at his calling. The missionaries in Rio were not sure whether or not he had the “blood of Cain,” so President Howells instructed them to stay with him and his family until they were sure. They did so, and discovered that he was actually the lightest-skinned member of a very black family. They were unable to give him the priesthood.¹⁷⁷ This policy created many difficulties for the missionaries, both in their efforts to spread the gospel to others, and in their ministering to those who were already members.

Despite the drastic differences between the two missionary programs of Presidents Rex and Howells, the Church in Rio de Janeiro finally experienced some real growth during their

¹⁷⁶ Howells, interview, 62-63.

¹⁷⁷ Howells, interview, 61-62.

tenures. This is most likely due to the fact that full-time missionaries returned to the city and became a consistent presence in the area again. The first clear sign of this growth was the influx of convert baptisms in Rio. The first person baptized in the city after the missionaries returned was Elba Maria Pessoa, who was baptized on May 10, 1948 at Copacabana beach.¹⁷⁸ Sister Elba became a committed member for the Church in Rio, attending meetings even when there were only three or four people in attendance, speaking in those meetings, and even serving as a local missionary for a year.¹⁷⁹ She and her sister, Maria Bastos Pessoa (who was baptized a few months later), served in several Church positions and became stalwarts of the Church in the city for decades.¹⁸⁰

Maria Pessoa's experience with her conversion illustrates the challenges these early converts faced. She had a "great group of friends" before she joined the Church. They, however, felt it was very odd that she would travel the fairly significant distance from her home in Laranjeiras to the Church in Tijuca twice every Sunday and then again on Tuesday evenings (for Relief Society). Maria said: "after my baptism, my friends began distancing themselves from me bit by bit." Eventually, her old friends had nothing to do with her. Her consolation, she said, was that the "missionaries were always spending time with us."¹⁸¹ In these early days of the Church

¹⁷⁸ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, May 10, 1948, 346. In these early years, the missionaries did not use fonts or pools for their baptisms. Instead, they used various beach areas around Rio.

¹⁷⁹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-1957, May 27, 1956; Robert L. Little Mission Journal, excerpts, August 19, 1956, in the possession of the author.

¹⁸⁰ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, August 8, 1948; Maria Bastos Pessoa, interview by Elder Norberto and Sister Rosângela Lopes, August to September 2010, transcript, p. 32-37, in Brazil Area Historical Record of the Church in Rio de Janeiro, Folder 1, Church History Library (hereafter cited as "Brazil Area Historical Record of the Church in Rio de Janeiro"). João Antônio Dias, who later served as Branch President and District President in Rio, described Maria Pessoa as "having a very large importance in the growth of the Church" during that early time. [Dias, interview by Elder and Sister Lopes, 25]

¹⁸¹ Pessoa, interview, 33.

in Rio, the people joining the Church needed to be willing to give up their social lives and their associations. Fortunately for the Pessoa sisters, other Brazilians soon joined their ranks.

Over the next year and a half, approximately two dozen others joined the Church. Among those baptized, several remained active in the Church and became influential members of the Church in Rio de Janeiro. Odmar Berqvist, baptized at São Conrado beach in November of 1948, later served as a service missionary and as a counselor in branch and district presidencies in Rio.¹⁸² Additionally, José Carlos and Izabel Baroni, who both went on to play an important role in the growth and leadership of the Church in the city, were baptized with their family by February of 1950.¹⁸³ Baptisms continued at a steady but slow pace for the next few years.¹⁸⁴ This group of initial converts provided the small but much needed foundation of Brazilian members for the Church to truly establish itself in the city.



Left: Maria Bastos Pessoa (left) and Elba Maria Pessoa (right)
Right: Members outside the meetinghouse in Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro, January 1950
[Brazil Area Historical Record of the Church in Rio de Janeiro, p. 6].

¹⁸² Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-57, “Tijuca Branch” Section, February 24, 1957; Tijuca Branch Manuscript History and Historical Reports, 1965-1984, Report Submitted December 31, 1968, November 10, 1968, and Report submitted December 31, 1970, December 13, 1970, Church History Library (hereafter cited as “Manuscript History of the Tijuca Branch”).

¹⁸³ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, August 28, 1948, 340, October 8, 1949, 279, and January 29, 1950, 259.

¹⁸⁴ President Howells described the growth of the Church in Rio, saying: “It was slow in comparison and it was rather difficult to get people to come out to our meetings.” [Howells Interview, 78]

Convert baptisms were not, however, the only sign of growth during this period. Another evidence of growth was when the numbers attending branch meetings grew to the point that the branch needed to move to the newer, better hall at Rua Camaragibe 16 in the Tijuca *bairro* of Rio. The Church used this hall not only for Sunday meetings, but also for English classes and for social activities. The members were proud of their new rented hall and worked to maintain it.¹⁸⁵ It became the center of not only their spiritual lives, but also their social lives; a place where they could associate with other people with the same beliefs and values. The members and missionaries long remembered with fondness their Church sanctuary on Rua Camaragibe.¹⁸⁶ The two-story building housed the Tijuca Branch for many years until the Tijuca chapel was built in 1965.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, October 6, 1948, 334, and July 29, 1950, 218.

¹⁸⁶ Delworth Young, interview by the author, American Fork, UT, April 20, 2015.

¹⁸⁷ Dias, interview by Elder and Sister Lopes, 25.



Missionaries in Rio de Janeiro standing outside the meetinghouse on Rua Camaragibe 16 in the Tijuca *bairro* of Rio in 1953. The sign above the bushes on the left states the name of the Church [Mission Photo Slides of Delworth K. Young, 1953, digitized versions in the possession of the author].

Another sign of the success of the Church in Rio was the activity of the branch's youth program, the Mutual Improvement Association (MIA). The branch in Rio had attempted to establish the MIA in early 1942, but it had never gained traction in the tumultuous time before the missionaries left Rio during World War II.¹⁸⁸ This 1948-1950 attempt, however, proved to be very successful. Both members and missionaries planned and carried out several social activities, including dances and sports competitions. The youth program also held gospel classes for the teenagers, with the young people often teaching each other. The minutes record several members, including Odmarr Berqvist, conducting the meetings. Additionally, in 1950, local

¹⁸⁸ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, January 11-25, 1942, 436 to October 26, 1942, 403.

Brazilian convert José Baroni served as the President of the organization.¹⁸⁹ With its combination of North American missionaries and local Brazilians both involved in this program, the MIA program is a great example of the mixed identity of the Church in the city during this transitional time.

Prompted by the success of these baptisms and other evidences of growth, the Church in the area entered a period of expansion. President Howells explained his reasons behind opening new areas. He said that it was “largely because missionaries . . . [felt] like there were friendly people in another adjacent city nearby and they, upon investigation, would find that they thought that we could go into these areas and maybe have some success.”¹⁹⁰

With this in mind, in the winter of 1950 President Howells expanded missionary work into Niterói, Rio de Janeiro’s neighboring city across the bay. On July 14, 1951, missionaries assigned to Niterói chose a meetinghouse location, followed approximately two weeks later by the first official meeting of the Niterói Branch since it had been closed during World War II.¹⁹¹ At around the same time, President Howells and the missionaries discussed dividing the Tijuca Branch in Rio de Janeiro, in order to create a second branch in the city.¹⁹² In September of 1951, President Howells opened the Copacabana Branch. The missionaries immediately found a place to hold meetings, and they started offering English classes. On October 28 they held their first Sunday School meeting in Copacabana.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ Tijuca Branch Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association Minutes and Records, 1948-1950, April 30 and May 7, 1949, October 30, 1948, August 20 to October 1, 1949, 1950 Opening Entry, Church History Library.

¹⁹⁰ Howells, interview, 76.

¹⁹¹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, July 14 and July 27, 1951, 111.

¹⁹² Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, November 15, 1950, 188.

¹⁹³ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, September 15, 1951, 83; Ipanema Branch General Minutes, 1955-1961, October 23, 1951, and October 28, 1951, Church History Library (hereafter cited as “Ipanema Branch General Minutes”).

Both of these new branches—Copacabana and Niterói—continued for some time and even began working to develop President Howells’s welfare program.¹⁹⁴ Unfortunately, after about a year in each area, meetings were discontinued in both branches.¹⁹⁵ This period of expansion failed, partly because missionaries did not have much success in converting new members, and also because the number of missionaries in the Brazilian Mission declined during this time.¹⁹⁶ Because the Church in these new areas was entirely dependent on North American missionaries rather than having a base of strong local Brazilian members, when the number of missionaries in Brazil again declined, the branches could not survive on their own. While the Church experienced some success in these first few years after the missionaries returned to Rio, its growth was “slow in comparison” to other areas of Brazil that had a more solid foundation of Brazilian members and continued to face setbacks because of its largely American identity.¹⁹⁷ Over the next few years, as local members began taking more of a role in leading the local congregations in Rio, significant strides were made in transitioning into a Brazilian Church and, consequently, this paved the way for more significant growth.

Attempting Brazilian Leadership

Possibly the most significant step toward becoming a more Brazilian Church during this time period was calling for the first time local Brazilian members into leadership positions to

¹⁹⁴ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, January 21, 1952, 70.

¹⁹⁵ Ipanema Branch General Minutes, October 6, 1952; Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, September 8, 1952, 3A. The missionaries again held Sunday School meetings in Niterói for a short time, beginning in December of 1942, but this did not last long [See Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-52, Dec. 14, 1952, 3A] The Niterói Branch was not officially reopened until 1955, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

¹⁹⁶ According to the mission record, the reason the Niterói Branch was closed in September of 1952 was that they did not have enough people attending meetings “to merit a hall.” [See Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, September 8, 1952, 30] Asael Sorensen said that in 1953 there were approximately twenty-five missionaries in the mission when he arrived to replace President Howells as Mission President. [Sorensen, interview, 33]

¹⁹⁷ Howells, interview, 78. Other areas also had a smaller percentage of those of African descent, and therefore faced fewer challenges related to the priesthood ban.

administer the Church in Rio. In 1953, José Carlos Baroni, who in 1949 had joined the Church with other family members, was set apart as Branch President of the Tijuca Branch. His counselors in the Branch Presidency were Elder Merrill F. Frost and Brother José Amaro Pinto Ramos.¹⁹⁸ This was the first time the local branch in the city was led by a native Brazilian, rather than a North American, and signaled the Church's progress toward becoming more self-sufficient and more Brazilian. President Baroni had been involved in missionary efforts in Rio, baptizing two individuals, and had also already served as President of the MIA program.¹⁹⁹ During his leadership of the branch, the Church held some very successful activities, including missionary-themed films shown around the city and attended by as many as 2,000 people.²⁰⁰ There were other social gatherings too; each of which helped to strengthen the branch and its membership. President Baroni served a year and half as Branch President before being released.²⁰¹

Unfortunately, President Baroni's service for the Church in Rio de Janeiro is often overlooked, largely because he was replaced as Branch President by another North American missionary.²⁰² While it is not clear why he was released, he continued to be active in the Church after he was released. Less than six months after his release, he was sustained as second counselor in the Branch Presidency and, years later, he spoke in the Rio de Janeiro District

¹⁹⁸Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, February 8, 1953, 20A.

¹⁹⁹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, March 29, and December 7, 1952, 3A; Tijuca Branch Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association Minutes and Records, 1948-1950, Report submitted for 1950, p. 1.

²⁰⁰ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1927-1952, May 4, 1953, 25. The missionaries received two films from missionaries in São Paulo ("The Valley of Triumph" and "The Crimson Cliffs") and showed them at various locations around the city, including the Church and the Military College.

²⁰¹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-57, July 4, 1954.

²⁰² President Baroni was released on July 4, 1954, and was replaced as Branch President by Elder Eldwin K. Lane. [Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-57, July 4, 1954] João Antonio Dias is sometimes erroneously credited as being the first native Brazilian Branch President in Rio de Janeiro, including in the online description of his interview in the Church History Library. [João A. Dias, interview by Frederick G. Williams, Brasilia, Brazil, August 29, 1976, copy in the possession of Mark Grover]

Conference.²⁰³ While other individuals may have had a more long-lasting effect on the leadership of the Church in the area, Brother Baroni's efforts to help build the Church before, during, and after his service as Branch President, should not be ignored as they have sometimes been.



Left: José Carlos Baroni
Right: José Amaro Pinto Ramos
[Brazil Area Historical Record of the Church in Rio de Janeiro, p. 7, 10].

Another event of great significance for the Church in Rio was the November 1953 arrival of President Asael Sorensen to replace President Howells.²⁰⁴ President Sorensen had served in Brazil as a young missionary before World War II, including working for a time in Rio de Janeiro.²⁰⁵ Eleven years later, he returned with his family and assumed the leadership of the Church in Brazil. Wilford Farnsworth, a member of the Church living and working in Rio de Janeiro during the tenures of both President Howells and President Sorensen, said: "I give Asael Sorensen a lot of credit too for getting things moving."²⁰⁶ Farnsworth's comment referred to the

²⁰³ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-57, November 6, 1954, and January 26, 1958.

²⁰⁴ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-57, November 19, 1953.

²⁰⁵ Sorensen, interview, 13.

²⁰⁶ Wilford M. Farnsworth, interview by Gordon Irving, Salt Lake City, UT, July 28, 2005, transcript, p. 15, Church History Library. Farnsworth was very critical of President Howells' administration of the Mission; especially his focus on the Welfare Program of the Church. Farnsworth felt that "the mission absolutely didn't progress" during President Howells' tenure. [Farnsworth, interview, 15]

significant changes that President Sorensen made to the Church and the missionary program in Brazil during his tenure. Essentially, President Sorensen shifted the mission from President Howells' proselyting methods based on North American characteristics to more focused proselyting methods with an emphasis on teaching universal gospel principles and not on peripheral aspects of the gospel such as American welfare practices.

When President Sorensen arrived, he felt there were many things about the mission and practices that should be altered. He felt that while President Howells's member-centric programs were good, the missionaries were called for a different purpose.²⁰⁷ He debated within himself, however, as to how much he could or should change the focus of the mission. Six weeks after arriving in Brazil, and while President Sorensen was still struggling with this decision, President David O. McKay, the President of the Church, visited South America. This visit was historic in that it was the first time a Church President had visited the continent.²⁰⁸ As part of this tour of South America, President McKay stopped in Brazil and counseled with President Sorensen.²⁰⁹

During this visit, President McKay changed the course of the Church in Brazil in many ways, most notably by encouraging President Sorensen to focus missionary work on proselyting and teaching.²¹⁰ When President Sorensen presented him with the list of things he wanted to change, President McKay simply looked at him and said: "When you find broken stones in a

²⁰⁷ President Sorensen said: "Naturally, all those things [selling food items in Church, training on weaving looms and food preservation] were good, but I felt that really wasn't our calling." [Sorensen, interview, 31] While caring for the poor and needy is an important principle in the Church (see D&C 84:112), President Sorensen felt that the mission's focus on the Welfare Program needed to change, and instead felt that the missionaries should focus on proselyting activities.

²⁰⁸ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-1957, January 21, 1954.

²⁰⁹ Sorensen, interview, 47-48.

²¹⁰ Grover, "Mormonism in Brazil," 172-74.

foundation, you just remove them and put in solid stones.”²¹¹ For President Sorensen, that was the signal that he could change anything and everything he felt was needed.

First, in an effort to move the mission away from President Howells’s welfare plan, President Sorensen sold or donated much of the welfare materials that the mission had been storing and used the space for missionary tracts and supplies.²¹² Second, President Sorensen discontinued the practice of using basketball teams, musical groups, and other means to increase the Church’s visibility. President Sorensen recognized that these were drastic changes away from the program President Howells had instituted, but he believed those practices should not be the central focus of their missionary efforts. He felt he “had to get the mission on the footing of a proselyting mission.”²¹³

President Sorensen and the mission leaders worked to establish a teaching program based on “the doctrines of the kingdom,” ultimately focusing on seventeen gospel topics they expected the missionaries to understand and teach to investigators.²¹⁴ He trained the missionaries to hold “street meetings” where they went to high-traffic parks or transportation stations, set up some visual aids, and taught passersby about various gospel topics in less than a minute, all with the

²¹¹ Sorensen, interview, 31-32.

²¹² President Sorensen described this transition saying: “We got rid of all of the welfare items being sold in the branches. We had over 2,000 pounds of wheat stored in the room where we kept all of our literature and the missionaries’ surplus baggage, and it was filled with weevil. Periodically the elders would take all that out, put it in the sun, and the weevil would crawl out of the wheat. . . . (The Seventh Day Adventists) came in with a truck and we cleared out all of the wheat. We needed the space for our tracts and so forth. We had stocks of canned jams, . . . pineapple and other fruits that they have in Brazil.” When President Howells found out that the mission had moved away from the welfare program, he wrote the mission to say that they were only giving the people half of the gospel. [See Sorensen, interview, 32] At one conference, an elder told President Sorensen: “I’m certainly grateful that I’ve learned something about the real proselyting program and how we should teach. I would have been real embarrassed to go home and in my homecoming say that I was the champion bread salesman of the mission.” [Sorensen, interview, 34]

²¹³ Sorensen, interview, 67 and 32.

²¹⁴ Sorensen, interview, 39. President Sorensen held the missionaries accountable through “scripture quizzes and . . . talks, calling on the elders to stand up and speak for three minutes on a given subject” without them knowing beforehand who would be called upon. [Sorensen, interview, 39]

purpose of trying to set up visits in their homes. Altogether, President Sorensen felt proud of his missionaries, saying that “they became real effective” gospel preachers.²¹⁵

One example of this was Elder Robert Little, a young missionary who served in Rio de Janeiro in 1956. He felt that many people he interacted with did not really understand the Bible, its purpose and content.²¹⁶ So, he decided to develop a lesson on the Bible. He studied and prepared a lesson, attempting to find the most logical ways to teach people these concepts. After a couple days of preparation, he wrote in his daily journal: “I gave two Bible lessons to families who much needed them. They enjoyed the explanations.”²¹⁷ This is one example of the missionaries under President Sorensen working to effectively teach the gospel to the people.

As President Sorensen developed his missionaries, he also worked to develop local Brazilian members, especially native Brazilian priesthood holders. He instituted a member-training program focused on training priesthood holders in the branches. His belief was that “as missionaries need to be interviewed and challenged, so do members of the priesthood need to be interviewed.” With this in mind, President Sorensen visited the branches and interviewed each adult male about once a year, asking them about their personal worthiness and dedication to God. He then counseled and challenged them accordingly. President Sorensen felt this practice did a great deal of good, and he credited it with preparing Brazilian men to be leaders over Church congregations in the coming years.²¹⁸ In this way, President Sorensen powerfully moved the Church toward being more Brazilian by strengthening the native members, particularly the priesthood-holding men. These were the currents within the Brazilian Church that were affecting the Church in Rio de Janeiro during this transitional period from 1953 to 1958.

²¹⁵ Sorensen, interview, 39, 41, 66.

²¹⁶ Robert L. Little, phone interview by the author, April 18, 2015.

²¹⁷ Robert L. Little Mission Journal, excerpts, August 30-September 3, 1956.

²¹⁸ Sorensen, interview, 36-38. President Sorensen tried to interview these men every six months, but soon found that the workload was too much, so he switched to interviewing them once a year.

One aspect of the work in Brazil that remained very foreign to the Brazilian cultural identity was the policy restricting the priesthood from men of black African descent. Because there is such ethnic diversity and mixing of racial lineage in Brazilian society, the idea of restricting someone based on their bloodline seemed to most Brazilians to be a very foreign, American idea. President Sorensen practiced strict adherence to this policy in much the same way President Howells had, counseling his missionaries to avoid spending time and energy proselyting black families.²¹⁹ It was standard practice for his missionaries to check the ancestry of all their investigators, by asking them about where their families came from, and casually requesting to see family pictures. While some missionaries, including Elder Delworth Young, felt that the priesthood ban didn't affect their work very much, Elder Little, who served in Rio, spoke of the proselyting challenges that the policy created.²²⁰ He said: "it was disappointing to have someone respond to the gospel and have them be black and [be] told, 'Well, don't concentrate on that [family]. Go to the others.'" ²²¹

Unlike President Howells, however, President Sorensen and his missionaries prepared a "lineage lesson" on the priesthood restriction that the missionaries taught to all their investigators before baptism. He described the lesson and how it helped investigators,

The lesson has to do with the right to the priesthood. We show them that the Lord doesn't give the priesthood to everybody. He doesn't give the priesthood to women. He didn't give it to Pharaoh even though Pharaoh was a very righteous man. We don't question that because we don't write the laws of God. God writes his own laws, and we're merely to administer those and teach them, and so on. So we give a lesson on this and we let them read what the First Presidency has said about it. When they come into the Church they know the reason that there are not a lot of Negroes in our congregations is because we're seeking out the remnant of the House of Israel, those who have the right to the priesthood.²²²

²¹⁹ President Sorensen told his missionaries, "we are called to gather in the remnants of the House of Israel, . . . our calling is not to the Negro." [Sorensen, interview, 61]

²²⁰ Young, interview; Little, interview.

²²¹ Little, interview.

²²² Sorensen, interview, 62.

He went on to explain that the missionaries taught this lesson to all their investigators so that they would not be shocked and distance themselves from the Church when they learned of the policy after being baptized. In President Sorensen's opinion, people had no problem accepting the restriction when the missionaries were open about the situation from the beginning and explained what they did and did not know about the priesthood ban.²²³

Despite the priesthood restriction severely limiting their teaching pool in Rio because of its large population of blacks, the Church experienced steady growth during President Sorensen's tenure. First, whereas President Howells had opened new areas in Rio some years earlier—but those branches eventually collapsed—under President Sorensen the Church underwent lasting expansion in the same areas of Rio. Initially, the Niterói Branch was reopened in July of 1955. Even though they began working in Niterói in July, the missionaries did not hold their first branch meetings until October, with only two members and one investigator in attendance.²²⁴ Its progress was slow, but the branch was never again closed and, by 1958, there were 42 members in Niterói.²²⁵ Additionally, the Copacabana Branch that had been closed in 1952 was re-opened in 1955, and renamed the Ipanema Branch. For the two years leading up to the opening of the new branch, a group of American members in Copacabana had been holding Sunday School

²²³ Sorensen, interview, 62. President Sorensen described the biggest challenge they faced as they explained the priesthood restriction. He said, "we have to caution the elders that they don't try to leave anyone with the idea or the opinion that we are biased in any way against any race, creed, or color, which actually we are not. But there are still some of those kind of missionaries in the mission field that have a strong bias against the Negro, and we have to watch them because they could cause damage." He also explained how they handled those rare situations where they later discovered that someone who had already received the priesthood did, in fact, have the lineage. Under the direction of President McKay and the other Church leaders, that individual's priesthood was not taken from him, but "suspended so that he doesn't exercise any priesthood function or administer in any priesthood ordinance any longer." He could only remember this happening once or twice under his stewardship. [Sorensen, interview, 61-63]

²²⁴ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-57, July 5, 1955, and October 23, 1955.

²²⁵ Irving, "Numerical Strength of the LDS Church in Brazil," 8.

meetings together.²²⁶ By 1958, this small group of North Americans had been joined by new members, and the Ipanema Branch had grown to 58 members. Both of these branches only continued to grow in the years following their reopening.²²⁷

The successful reestablishment of these two branches was part of President Sorensen's broader growth plan for the Church in Rio de Janeiro. Since early 1954, President Sorensen had been planning to create a Church district with headquarters in Rio. On January 3rd of that year, he had discussed the possibility with branch members in Tijuca.²²⁸ A district is an administrative unit with supervision over several branches. The president of a district serves under the direction of the mission president. On October 16, 1955, President Sorensen announced the formation of "the district of Rio de Janeiro," which consisted of the Tijuca, Niterói, Juiz de Fora, and Belo Horizonte Branches. When the Ipanema Branch opened two months later, it also became part of the Rio de Janeiro District. A young North American missionary, Elder Richard Winfield Bond, served as the first District President.²²⁹ The formation of a district is a significant step in the growth of the Church in a given area. It is a signal that the Church in the area has developed a certain level of self-sufficiency, in that it will no longer report directly to the mission president but, instead, to the local district president. It is also a precursor to the formation of a stake, an autonomous administrative unit that operates under the direction of the Church leaders in Salt Lake, rather than under the mission president.

Shortly after this important expansion, a young Army soldier named João Antonio Dias moved to Rio de Janeiro for military school. Dias was baptized into the Church in 1952 at the

²²⁶ Ipanema Branch General Minutes, December 21, 1955; Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-57, March 12, 1955, and December 11, 1955.

²²⁷ Irving, "Numerical Strength of the LDS Church in Brazil," 8.

²²⁸ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-1957, January 3, 1954.

²²⁹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-1957, October 16, 19, and November 3, 1955; Ipanema Branch General Minutes, December 21, 1955.

age of 17. When he moved to Rio in 1956, he was still young. However, it did not take long for him to take on an important role in the Church in that city.²³⁰ In fact, in his own words, Dias joked: “I started the Church in Rio.”²³¹

João Dias lived in Rio during two separate periods of his life. The first was from 1956 to 1958. The second was 1960 to 1970.²³² Though he spent only two years in Rio during this first period, he was still very influential. Not long after he arrived in Rio, Dias was called to serve as Tijuca Branch President.²³³ President Dias immediately tried to help the branch members by holding a series of activities. The first was a large dinner, to which he invited all the old members of the Church who hadn’t been attending meetings. He spent time getting to know and visiting with each of them. In this process, he asked them to come back to Church. Many began to attend, so Dias began organizing other social activities, including theater productions and a Halloween costume party.²³⁴

President Dias faced two major challenges during his time as branch president. First, he described some contention within the branch, saying that the various organizations—Relief Society, Sunday School, Young Women’s, and Primary—were “always fighting,” and that their constant fighting was “crippling” the branch. Second, with a few notable exceptions, he found that the members put a large portion of the responsibility on him, rather than doing the work themselves.²³⁵ As stated earlier, there were some exceptions. Some members worked diligently

²³⁰ João A. Dias, interview by Williams, 3-4.

²³¹ João Antonio Dias Filho, interview by Sean Dahlin, Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil, May 20, 2010, transcript, p. 21-22, Mormonism in Brazil: Oral History Project.

²³² This second period of life in Rio will be discussed in great detail in the following chapters.

²³³ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-57, February 24, 1957.

²³⁴ Dias, interview by Williams, 5.

²³⁵ Dias, interview by Williams, 6.

and were very important in helping the Church grow in the city.²³⁶ Many, however, “began to relax” and throw everything “on [his] back.”²³⁷

For example, he had great difficulty getting his secretary to fulfill his responsibilities, so he would often go to the Church at night to do the reports the secretary should have been handling. Another instance was when President Dias was in his office struggling mightily as he worked on a financial report. A member of the branch walked in and saw that the office was dirty and needed cleaning. The member commented that President Dias should clean the place. President Dias responded: “There’s a broom over there. You can do your part, too. Clean it yourself.”²³⁸ Even with these challenges, President Dias said it was “a very good experience” and that the branch “began to grow and progress ... [and] push forward” the Church in Rio. During his two years as branch president the Tijuca Branch doubled in size, increasing to 70 people by 1958.²³⁹

While each branch president’s experience is unique, President Dias’s call fits in well as part of the larger mission initiative. After President Sorensen had been in Brazil for about four years, he “felt the mission should start moving the missionaries out of the branch positions and replacing them with local members.” Therefore, he began a member leadership-training program for the mission. In his own words, President Sorensen said he felt that the Church was “treading water too long in too many branches, not allowing the members an opportunity for real development and growth.”²⁴⁰ Hence, President Dias’s presidency was not a mere fluke, but part

²³⁶ Dias, interview by Elder and Sister Lopez, 25.

²³⁷ Dias, interview by Williams, 6.

²³⁸ Dias, interview by Williams, 6.

²³⁹ Dias, interview by Williams, 5-6; Irving, “Numerical Strength of the LDS Church in Brazil,” 8.

²⁴⁰ Sorensen, interview, 38.

of a concerted effort to help the Church in Brazil grow as Brazilians began replacing North Americans as the leaders of local congregations in Brazil.

Unfortunately, even though the Church in Rio made some progress toward becoming a Brazilian Church, it remained largely American. While President Dias' service as branch president was certainly encouraging, he, like President Baroni, was replaced by a young North American missionary when his service was done—largely because there simply weren't native Brazilians who were ready to step up and take the reigns of leadership in the congregation. The other branches in Rio and Nieterói continued to be led by full-time missionaries from the United States, and for the same reason. Lastly, even though President Dias had been in charge of the Tijuca Branch, he had labored under the direction of young North American missionaries serving as Rio de Janeiro District President. So, even though a portion of the Church in Rio was led by a Brazilian, the overall guidance of the Church in the city still fell under the direct local leadership of North Americans.²⁴¹ All this was evidence that, as this period came to a close, the Church in the area had progressed, but still had a long way to go to become Brazilian and, thereby, experience even more success.

In summation, after the missionaries returned to Rio in 1947, they began a period of slow growth during which the missionaries shared their gospel message with Brazilians. The Church in Rio de Janeiro experienced its first real growth as a few Brazilians were baptized and remained active in the Church. For several years, however, the missionaries focused on North American-centric welfare practices and publicity activities, inadvertently communicating a subtle message that this was an American and not a Brazilian Church. This stagnated the growth of the Church in the area, which continued at a slow pace and struggled to expand. It was not until

²⁴¹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1958-1960, October 5, September 19-20, and January 26, 1958.

President Sorensen focused the missionaries on simply preaching and teaching scriptural gospel principles that the Church in the city was able to reach the next level of growth and expansion.

Additionally, during this era the leadership in Rio became more Brazilian. The first Brazilian branch presidents were called, though neither remained in their position long. The identity of the branch leadership began transitioning back and forth between American and Brazilian. By 1958, when President Sorensen's tenure was coming to an end, the Brazilian Mission and the Church in Rio were on the verge of great success. He had effectively moved them away from many of the American-centric practices of earlier times, and he had them poised for steady, significant growth as they became increasingly Brazilian.

Chapter 4

Significant Growth (1958-1968)

Cleuza Bastos Silva Remor held her son in her arms and hoped for a miracle. The doctor had told her that a miracle is what it would take for him to recover from his serious case of meningitis. As she held her boy that evening, she heard a knock at the door. When she answered, she saw two American missionaries who “spoke Portuguese poorly.” With their broken Portuguese, they told her they had the power to cure her son with a blessing of health. This was “what she most wanted.” When her husband arrived home later that night, the two young Americans returned to Cleuza’s house and anointed the boy’s head with oil, pronounced a blessing of health upon him, and set an appointment to return and visit the family. Cleuza’s son “began to improve and within a week he was completely healed.”²⁴²

Cleuza began investigating the Church in the late 1950s, though her mother, who was a devoted Catholic, strongly disapproved. She lived down the street from the Church meetinghouse and, as she attended meetings and learned more about the Church and its people, she saw that it was a good, worthy religion; better than any other she knew. Though her mother continued to disapprove and oppose what she was doing, Cleuza chose to be baptized on May 2, 1959 in the ocean at *Praia Vermelha* (Red Beach), at the base of Sugarloaf Mountain. Her husband, Antônio, was baptized a few years later.²⁴³

Even when she was new in the Church, Cleuza became very active in the branch in Rio de Janeiro. Her first responsibility in the Church was to teach a class about the Book of Mormon. She was surprised by the call, and asked her local branch leader how she would be able to do it. He replied that she “had been called by revelation to teach,” and then he gave her a teaching

²⁴² Cleuza Bastos Silva Remor, interview by Elder Norberto and Sister Rosângela Lopes, August to September 2010, transcript, p. 68-69, in Brazil Area Historical Record of the Church in Rio de Janeiro.

²⁴³ Remor, interview, 69-70.

manual to help her with the calling.²⁴⁴ She began studying and teaching, and serving in the Church in a variety of ways for many years. She visited other members to try to strengthen them, and she also talked to her friends about the Church in an effort to explain her religion to those of other faiths.²⁴⁵

Cleuza and her husband were actively involved in the Church in the city during a pivotal era of sustained growth, from 1958 to 1968. Her story is typical of many members during this time, and represents this new era for the Church in the area. Missionaries that were focused on proselyting activities brought her into the Church, and she, a Brazilian, very quickly received a responsibility in her local congregation. As this chapter will show, the Church in Rio de Janeiro moved forward at a steady pace as the missionaries focused on proselyting activities and as Brazilian members took on a more significant role in the Church in the city.

This period of steady, significant growth for the Church in Rio, was a “new era” for the Church in Brazil, and the man who ushered it in was a new mission president, William Grant Bangerter. President Bangerter arrived in Brazil in 1958 succeeding President Sorensen as president of the Brazilian Mission. President Sorensen had moved the work away from the North American-centric approach that had preceded him. He had begun the transition and had the mission and missionaries to the point where they could take the next leap forward in growth. President Bangerter arrived and gave the mission the push it needed to make that leap.²⁴⁶

President Bangerter, his wife, and their children arrived in São Paulo on November 26, 1958.²⁴⁷ He had served in Brazil as a young missionary from 1939 to 1941.²⁴⁸ As he approached

²⁴⁴ Remor, interview, 69.

²⁴⁵ Remor, interview, 69-72.

²⁴⁶ President Bangerter said: “later on, we called it [the] ’New Era’ of missionary work in Brazil. The power of the Spirit of the Lord began to be felt all over the country.” [Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 180]

²⁴⁷ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1958-1960, November 26, 1958.

this new responsibility, he felt “the time had arrived for the full order of the Church to be established.” He said that, until that time, “foreign missions... had been directed somewhat informally. Missionaries labored faithfully. They made contacts and preached the gospel, but the full order of organization of the Church was lacking. Individual members were baptized and then watched over by the missionaries, but the priesthood was not well established among the members.”²⁴⁹

With this purpose in mind, President Bangerter moved forward, pushing the Church toward more Brazilian practices and leadership. Mark Grover described this shift saying: “President Sorensen had instilled in the missionaries a desire to work and baptize. But President Bangerter, like most new mission presidents, began to notice certain things he would do differently, not because what was happening was wrong but because it didn’t fit Bangerter’s perception of the best way to do missionary work.”²⁵⁰ While President Sorensen and others had made some small efforts to build Brazilian leadership, President Bangerter made this a primary emphasis during his tenure and took the necessary steps to make this dream a reality.²⁵¹

The sign of a truly influential individual is that their work continues to have success even after they are gone. President Bangerter did not merely change the Brazilian Church during his tenure, he set it on a new track that his successors continued and moved forward. President Wayne M. Beck, who replaced President Bangerter in August of 1963, said he felt satisfied with

²⁴⁸ Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 55.

²⁴⁹ Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 175-76.

²⁵⁰ Grover, *A Land of Promise and Prophecy*, 118.

²⁵¹ President Bangerter attributed the success he had in making these changes to the power of God and the efforts of the missionaries themselves. He said: “You just cannot side-step the realization and assurance and power of the Holy Spirit to move things and to do things through his servants. It just had to happen and it was in His time and in His way. Missionaries recently have asked me, ‘How did you do all that you did President?’ ... I said, ‘I didn’t do that. The Lord did it. He just unfolded it and made it possible. Who really did it were you missionaries. We just decided to do things and it was accomplished.’” [William Grant Bangerter, interview by Mark Grover, Alpine, UT, April 25, 2001, transcript, p. 7, Mormonism in Brazil: Oral History Project.]

President Bangerter's programs and felt that he should "merely do more vigorously what had already been done."²⁵² Then, in July of 1966, President Beck was replaced by Lloyd R. Hicken, who also did not feel he needed to make serious, fundamental changes.²⁵³

President Bangerter made significant adjustments both to the member organizations and programs under his supervision, and also to the work of his missionaries. Presidents Beck and Hicken continued in the same vein, and even made additional modifications to help the Church grow in Brazil. These changes resulted in the Church in Brazil becoming less North American and more Brazilian and, because of this shift, the Church in Rio entered a period of remarkable growth from 1958 to 1968. The Church in the city grew so significantly during this time that Church leaders created a new mission in Brazil, headquartered in Rio de Janeiro. In this chapter, we will examine the changes these mission presidents made to member organizations and missionary work, and how these changes helped the Church grow in Rio de Janeiro.

Member Organizations

When President Bangerter arrived, he found a mission that had already come a long way from the North American-centric practices and policies of previous eras. He quickly looked for the places where the mission could make additional improvements to help the Church grow in Brazil. He made several important changes in the local districts and branches of the Church, the organizations made up of members rather than missionaries. First, he established a stronger

²⁵² Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1963-1964, August 2, 1963; Beck, interview, 71. President Beck said: "President Bangerter had a good proselyting structure. All I wanted to do was to increase the effectiveness of the hours those men were already spending within that structure." [Beck, interview, 71]

²⁵³ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1963-1964, July 24, 1966. When asked if he made any changes to the existing mission program, President Hicken responded that he felt he needed to go out with the missionaries more often, and that large groups of missionaries should not live in the same apartment. [Hicken, interview, 53-54] He did not, however, fundamentally shift the approach of the missionary work and leadership of the Church in Brazil.

organization of the Church by helping Brazilians to assume leadership over their branches and districts. He also emphasized the retention and integration of new converts, as well as the construction of new chapels in Brazil.

When he first arrived in Brazil, President Bangerter described the Church as being “mostly small branches of members, more women than men, and some children, with a missionary presiding.”²⁵⁴ In his autobiography, President Bangerter wrote the following:

The Lord helped me to see that the missionaries were in charge of everything, including the leadership of the districts and branches. There had been so few men baptized and ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood that few had been called to leadership. The same thing was true among the women’s organizations. Missionaries were still giving direction to the Relief Societies. Elders and sisters of the missionary force were doing most of the teaching not only of the gospel but of the programs of the church. The Spirit of the Lord, therefore, helped me see that we needed to break out of some of these old patterns.²⁵⁵

President Bangerter adopted the attitude that “the worst member branch president would be better than the best missionary branch president,” so he worked to remove missionaries from these branch leadership positions and replace them with local members.²⁵⁶

While these newly-called native branch presidents did not succeed every time, this change served two important purposes.²⁵⁷ First, this allowed the missionaries to spend more time on proselyting activities, rather than administrative responsibilities they had as branch leaders. Consequently, this led to missionaries bringing more people into the Church through conversions. Second, this change helped develop the “full order of the Church” in Brazil by allowing it to become more self-sufficient as it was led by native Brazilians.

²⁵⁴ Bangerter, interview, 2.

²⁵⁵ Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 176.

²⁵⁶ Bangerter, interview, 4-5.

²⁵⁷ President Bangerter wrote of one such occasion, where a native Brazilian branch president did not succeed. He remembered that “on one occasion, [he] had organized six branches under local presidencies, and in one week three of those presidents resigned and left their calling. Two of them left the Church.” [Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 222]

While other mission presidents, including President Sorensen, had occasionally attempted to put Brazilian members into leadership positions in local branches, developing Brazilian leadership had not been their main priority. President Bangerter, on the other hand, was committed to removing missionaries from local Church leadership positions, largely so the missionaries could have more time to proselyte. He put great effort into calling native branch presidents and giving them the training and support they needed to succeed. Hence, President Bangerter's policies produced an enduring shift in the Church in Brazil. Before President Bangerter, there had only been a handful of native branch presidents. By 1963, the end of Pres. Bangerter's tenure, there were forty branches in Brazil presided over by a native Brazilian branch president.²⁵⁸ President Bangerter also tried to replace the missionaries serving as district presidents as well. He felt that, at both the branch and district level, the members needed to be in positions of leadership to help the Church in Brazil become truly self-sufficient.²⁵⁹

One of the regions where President Bangerter made these changes was in Rio de Janeiro. When João Dias moved away (in October of 1958), and was replaced as branch president, the leadership of the Church in Rio was entirely North American.²⁶⁰ Over the next several years, under the "new era" of President Bangerter and his successors, the membership of the local branches in Rio grew, and more of these congregations in Rio and Niterói were led by native Brazilians.

The Tijuca Branch is an example of this increase in Brazilian leadership, even though it was not led by a native Brazilian. In 1959, Brazilians were serving in a number of leadership positions in the branch, including as a counselor in the Branch Presidency, Sunday School

²⁵⁸ Grover, "Mormonism in Brazil," APPENDIX H, 308.

²⁵⁹ Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 222.

²⁶⁰ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1958-1960, October 5, 1958.

Superintendent, and more.²⁶¹ The Niterói Branch, on the other hand, had never had a native Brazilian branch president prior to President Bangerter's arrival. Finally, in June of 1961, the North American missionary, Elder Richard Pratt, was released as branch president, and Jocelyn Ferreira, a Brazilian, was called in his place.²⁶² Having the branch under the leadership of a Brazilian was an important step for Niterói, Rio de Janeiro's sister city.

Over the next few years, several other branches also came under the leadership of Brazilian members of the Church. By March of 1962, both the Méier and Bonsucesso branches in Rio de Janeiro had Brazilian branch presidents.²⁶³ President Bangerter called Orlando de Oliveira Maia to preside over the Méier Branch, which had been created in 1960, and Riskala Zacharias to preside over the Bonsucesso Branch, which had been created in 1961.²⁶⁴ By 1967, only one of the four branches in the Rio de Janeiro area, the Jardim Botânico Branch, was led by a North American branch president.²⁶⁵

As President Bangerter and his successors worked to establish the "full order of the Church" in Brazil, they found it necessary not only to remove the missionaries from those positions and replace them with native Brazilians, but also to train the newly called Brazilian

²⁶¹ The Tijuca Branch had already had two Brazilians serve as branch president: José Carlos Baroni in 1953, and João Antônio Dias from 1957 to 1958.

²⁶² Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1961-1962, "Niterói Branch" Section, June 4, 1961, and March 25, 1962.

²⁶³ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1961-1962, "Rio de Janeiro Member District" Section, March 3, 1962.

²⁶⁴ Irving, "Numerical Strength of the LDS Church in Brazil," p. 8; Dias, interview by Irving, 7-8; Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1961-1962, "Bom Sucesso Branch" Section, December 10, 1961.

²⁶⁵ Val Carter, interview by the author, Morgan, UT, May 23, 2015. The branch president was Val Carter, a North American man living and working in Rio de Janeiro. The demographic in the Jardim Botânico Branch was different from the other branches in Rio de Janeiro. Because the American school was in their geographic boundaries, many English-speaking North Americans lived in the boundaries of the Jardim Botânico Branch. In fact, the branch had such a high American population that the branch held an English-speaking Sunday School and Primary for a time, until the mission president encouraged them to discontinue it.

leaders.²⁶⁶ Many of these Brazilians had little or no experience in the Church and, therefore, needed to be trained on Church procedure and more. President Bangerter and the mission leaders established a practice of extensive leadership training for these native Brazilians.

President Bangerter described this training saying: “[we] demonstrated graphically how sacrament meeting should be conducted. We taught the various programs of Church activity, such as home teaching, welfare, and genealogy. We eventually had seminars to train these groups of leaders and help them understand what the Church should really look like and how it should fulfill its purpose when it was properly organized.”²⁶⁷ Later, President Beck implemented an extensive program of interviews with all members, not just the leaders, where he asked about their testimony and then what they could do to show their faith and devotion to God.²⁶⁸ These measures were all established to help Brazilians develop the ability to lead the Church in their country.

João Dias was one of the men trained and tutored by these mission presidents. Dias, an army officer, had served as branch president in Rio de Janeiro before moving away in 1958. Two years later, he moved back to Rio and again became one of the stalwart, foundational members in that area. In fact, President Bangerter described Dias as “one of the true pioneers... one of those foundation boys.”²⁶⁹ Shortly after returning to the city, Dias was called to be the President of the Rio de Janeiro District.²⁷⁰

On October 30, 1960, President Joseph Fielding Smith, the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church, presided at a special conference of the Rio de Janeiro

²⁶⁶ Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 222.

²⁶⁷ Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 234.

²⁶⁸ Beck, interview, 89-92.

²⁶⁹ Bangerter, interview, 15-16. President Hicken, who also worked with Dias, said that he “had great ability, intelligence and spirituality, and was very converted... João was a fine leader, one whom I could trust, and whose judgment I found very good.” [Hicken, interview, 67-68]

²⁷⁰ Dias, interview by Elder and Sister Lopes, 7-8, 26.

District. About 190 members and investigators from the Branches of Tijuca, Ipanema, Niterói, Petrópolis, and Méier gathered at the Theater of the Brazilian Associated Press for the special occasion. It was at this conference João Dias was called as District President. His two counselors were Merrill Boyce Asay, an American member from the Ipanema Branch, and Jorge Mauler, a presumably Brazilian member who had been serving in the Petrópolis Branch.²⁷¹ It was only the second district presidency in Brazil, to be made up entirely of lay members, rather than full-time missionaries.²⁷² This was a significant step for the Church in Rio, because members were assuming administrative responsibility at every level of Church leadership.

João Dias served as district president for ten years.²⁷³ During that time, his service focused on visiting and strengthening the branches under his supervision. Each Sunday, he and one of his counselors visited one of the various branches in the district, sometimes being gone all day because of the distance they had to travel.²⁷⁴ Traveling to these branches, working with and training individual branch leaders, and visiting the members was tiresome work for President Dias. Decades later he said: “certainly, it was during these years that I worked the hardest in the Church.”²⁷⁵

The fruits of his labors are obvious. When Dias returned to Rio de Janeiro in 1960, there were only three small branches in Rio and Niterói, with a total of 152 members. In 1970, when

²⁷¹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1958-1960, October 30, 1960. The Manuscript History indicates that he was a resident of Petrópolis, and his Portuguese and German name points to his heritage as Brazilian.

²⁷² Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 222. The first native Brazilian District Presidency was in São Paulo.

²⁷³ Dias, interview by Williams, 26.

²⁷⁴ Dias, interview by Williams, 9, and Dias, interview by Elder and Sister Lopes, 28. Also, while many of the branches did not keep or submit manuscript histories for this time period, the Tijuca Branch did from 1965 to 1970. Its manuscript history frequently mentions President Dias visiting the branch [Manuscript History of the Tijuca Branch, 1965 to 1970], sometimes stopping in every few weeks. [Manuscript History of the Tijuca Branch, Report Submitted March 31, 1966]

²⁷⁵ Dias, interview, by Elder and Sister Lopes, 28.

he was released as district president and moved away, there were five strong branches in the area with a total of 2,095 members.²⁷⁶ While there were several factors in this incredible growth, it is important to recognize the determined efforts of the man who presided over the Church in the area during this time.²⁷⁷ President Dias said that his one great objective during his tenure as district president was to prepare the Church in the area to become a stake. Though this goal was not realized before President Dias moved away in 1970, the first stake of the Church was organized in Rio two years later.²⁷⁸ We will discuss the creation of the first stake in Rio in the next chapter.

In addition to helping strengthen the member organizations and programs through calling and training native Brazilian leaders in the Church, President Bangerter also increased the efforts to retain and integrate new converts into the Church congregations. The higher baptism rate created a need to increase efforts to ensure the large number of converts remained active in the Church. Though the activity rates in Brazil were not much different from the rest of the Church, President Bangerter felt that he could help them improve and was directed by Elder Spencer W. Kimball to do so.²⁷⁹ With this purpose in mind, President Bangerter established a mission-wide program for integrating new converts. The program was to help newly-baptized members become better acquainted with branch leaders and members. They were also given “integration classes” that explained in detail the expectations, doctrine, and organization of the Church.²⁸⁰

The next mission presidents continued to emphasize the importance of retaining new members in the Church. President Beck felt that one of the best ways to retain converts was to

²⁷⁶ Irving, “Numerical Strength of the LDS Church in Brazil,” p. 5-8.

²⁷⁷ President Bangerter said that President Dias “needs to be recognized and be given his real reward.” [Bangerter, interview, 15-16]

²⁷⁸ Dias, interview by Elder and Sister Lopes, 28.

²⁷⁹ Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 224; Bangerter, interview, 3.

²⁸⁰ Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 180-87; Bangerter, interview, 3.

concentrate on bringing families into the Church. He said that “where they brought in families, and concentrated on families, the progress in total might be faster than where they just got a lot of baptisms.” President Beck felt this was important enough that he said he almost had to “limit the missionaries from baptizing so many people, and insist that they bring in families and not just a lot of members.”²⁸¹

While the written records regarding other branches in Rio de Janeiro are unavailable, the Tijuca Branch seems to have put great effort into retaining new converts. President Beck listed the branch as one of the best in the mission at retention.²⁸² The branch seems to have put forth an extra effort, holding various social activities designed to increase feelings of fellowship between seasoned and novice Church members. For example, they hosted a large barbecue during Carnaval, a famous Brazilian holiday season.²⁸³ Branch members also organized a movie showing, as well as a combined activity with the Relief Society and Young Women organizations, and several others.²⁸⁴ These are merely a few of the many social activities in the Tijuca Branch during this time.

President Dias felt it was important for the members to be united in as many ways as possible. One obstacle that the Church in Rio had always faced in the effort to become truly united as members was the language barrier. Because of the high number of North Americans working and living in Rio de Janeiro, the Church in the city had always had a large English-speaking population. This sometimes meant that meetings and classes were held in English rather than Portuguese, which created an informal division between members.

²⁸¹ Beck, interview, 97.

²⁸² Beck, interview, 97.

²⁸³ Manuscript History of the Tijuca Branch, Report Submitted December 1966, February 20, 1966.

²⁸⁴ Manuscript History of the Tijuca Branch, Report Submitted December 1967, November 25, 1967, and December, 1967.

When President Dias became district president in 1960, the Ipanema Branch was holding all their meetings in English. Upon assuming the responsibility, he immediately switched those meetings to Portuguese saying: “We are in Brazil... The Americans need to learn to speak Portuguese.”²⁸⁵ President Val Carter, a North American member who served as branch president of the Jardim Botânico Branch at a time when English-speaking meetings were discontinued, felt that President Dias was right to insist all meetings be conducted in Portuguese. He said that holding meetings in separate languages made the Brazilian members feel like the North American Church members were “better than them.”²⁸⁶ The common language at the meetings helped unify the members and maintain their activity in the Church.

Through innovative practices, such as calling “construction missionaries,” the Church also began a “new era” of chapel construction and meetinghouse improvement for the Church in Brazil.²⁸⁷ This building program, which began during President Bangerter’s tenure, involved finding large homes that could be used as meetinghouses and also constructing new Church-owned chapels. The Church in Rio de Janeiro experienced both sides of this building program during this time period. The growth of the Jardim Botânico Branch necessitated finding a larger meetinghouse. President Bangerter located and purchased a larger home where the Jardim

²⁸⁵ Dias, interview by Williams, 8.

²⁸⁶ Carter, interview. Carter did not mention how the language shift in the branch meetings affected the activity levels of the English-speaking members of the branch. He only stated that he felt it unified the branch to have all the meetings in Portuguese.

²⁸⁷ Mark Grover explained this building program in great detail in his book about Elder Tuttle’s time in South America. He described the construction missionaries and their work. They were typically called to serve for one to two years, and worked in their own country. While they did not receive a salary, they did receive clothes and were given food by local members. They often lived in makeshift quarters on the chapel construction site. They would rise early in the morning, work all day with fewer breaks than a typical construction worker, and occasionally go out in the evenings with the proselyting missionaries to teach investigators. “The experience was rigorous and demanding.” [Grover, *Land of Promise*, 214]

Botânico Branch met for quite some time. The house was later demolished to make room for the construction of a chapel.²⁸⁸

While this upgrade for the Jardim Botânico Branch was an important event for the Church in the city during this period, an even more significant event took place in the Tijuca Branch: the construction of the first chapel in Rio de Janeiro. The process began in 1960 with President Bangerter visiting the city to evaluate the parcel of land where the chapel would be located.²⁸⁹ After the Church bought the land, the members, missionaries, and other Church builders began the construction process; a process which lasted two years.²⁹⁰ The construction was a joint effort, with full-time missionaries and members often helping the actual Church builders.²⁹¹ For example, President Dias said: “When the construction began, I went to the site every night, to work with a hoe, digging a hole where the building’s foundations would be. Normally, I worked alone, in the dark, because the people that worked there did not work at night. I would work there until ten o’clock at night, then return home to lay down because I had to be at the military compound at six in the morning.”²⁹² Other members also helped the construction missionaries with important parts of the construction work.²⁹³

²⁸⁸ Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 216.

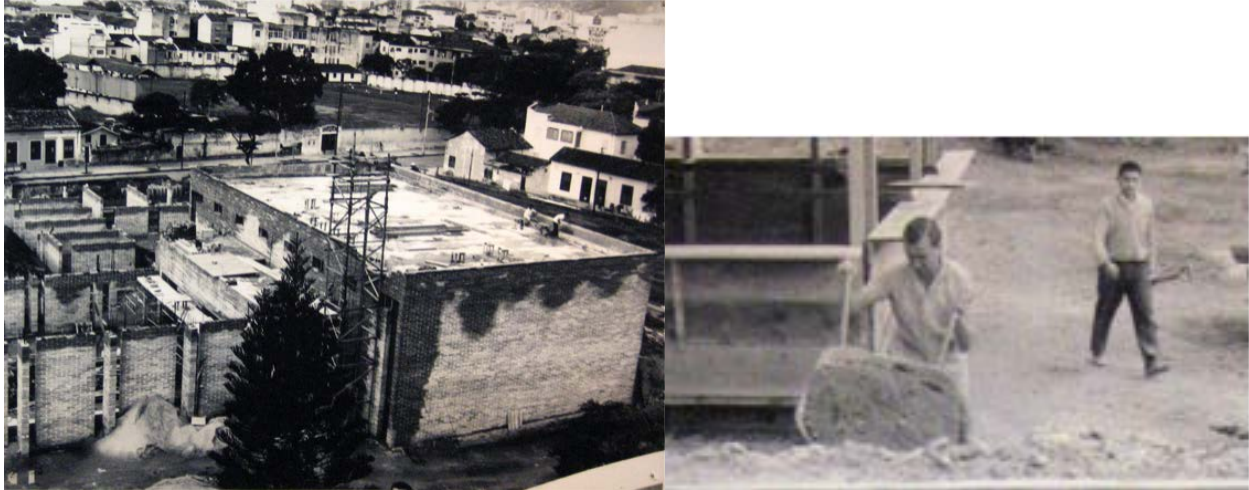
²⁸⁹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1958-1960, April 24, 1960.

²⁹⁰ Dias, interview by Elder and Sister Lopes, 29; Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1965-66, captions from the photos portion of the manuscript reports.

²⁹¹ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1965-66, captions from the photos portion of the manuscript reports.

²⁹² Dias, interview by Elder and Sister Lopes, 29.

²⁹³ Manuscript History of the Tijuca Branch, Report Submitted March 31, 1966, June 17, 1965. In 1964, while this construction process was under way, Elder Spencer W. Kimball visited the construction site during a visit to Rio de Janeiro. [Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1963-1964, June 2, 1964]



Left: The Tijuca Chapel while it was under construction.
Right: Missionaries working on the construction of the Tijuca Chapel
[Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1965-1966, Photos Section].

In the time leading up to the dedication of the new Church building, the local members hosted an open house for their chapel. The members and missionaries opened the chapel and invited the public to tour the building where members and missionaries had set up displays explaining various topics concerning the Church. Members were stationed in many of the rooms to teach visitors who passed through looking at the displays. For example, one group of Relief Society sisters presented their various wares, attempting to show that the Church encourages learning “for all ages and both sexes.” Additionally, the missionaries spoke with visitors and took down the names of people that would be interested in learning more about the Church.²⁹⁴ By the time the chapel was dedicated, more than 1,400 people had visited the new building.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁴ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1965-66, captions from the photos portion of the manuscript reports.

²⁹⁵ Manuscript History of the Tijuca Branch, Report Submitted March 31, 1966, and July 3, 1965.



Left: One of the sisters in the Tijuca Branch showed the displays to the visitors the display and explained what the church offers its members.

Right: The Tijuca Chapel during the open house. Over 1,400 people visited the new building.
[Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1965-1966, Photos Section].

On July 4, 1965, the Tijuca chapel was dedicated in a large district conference, with President Beck presiding. The meeting included talks by several people, including João Dias, the Rio de Janeiro District President, and Wayne Beck, President of the Brazilian Mission. Also, a choir made up of members from the Tijuca Branch performed during the conference.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁶ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1965-66, captions from the photos portion of the manuscript reports.



Left: President João Antonio Dias (right) was joined at the podium during the conference by President Joselino Dias (center), Branch President of the Tijuca Branch, and Brother Dalton (left), the construction supervisor for the building.

Right: The choir from the Tijuca Branch performed during the meeting.
[Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1965-1966, Photos Section].

This significant event evidenced not only the numerical growth of the Church in Rio de Janeiro, but also the strength of the member organizations in the city. The Church in the city had reached a point where its strongest branch merited an actual chapel, rather than just another large house or rented hall. Additionally, the Church in the area had been able to give the notable manpower and resources necessary to build this special building. This chapel indicated that the Church in Rio de Janeiro had taken another significant step forward in establishing “the full order” of the Church’s member organizations.

Missionary Work

President Bangerter made some significant changes in how missionary work in Brazil was conducted, and the presidents who followed him continued in that path, ultimately creating this period of incredible growth in Brazil and in the city of Rio de Janeiro. We will first discuss the changes the missionaries made and the challenges they faced in Rio de Janeiro. Then we will

examine their success during this time period. The culmination of the missionary-related success of this era was the creation of a new mission in Brazil, headquartered in Rio de Janeiro.

When President Bangerter arrived as mission president, he not only changed the member programs of the Church, but also instituted many changes in policies regarding missionary work. To begin with, he increased, rather than decreased, proselyting expectations for missionary leaders. In previous years, the leading missionaries had reduced proselyting expectations due to the extra responsibilities they bore when they were serving as branch or district presidents. For example, missionaries serving in leadership positions were only expected to devote 35 hours of actual proselyting time per week, rather than the standard 50 hours expected of other missionaries. Shortly after President Bangerter arrived in the mission, Elder Spencer W. Kimball visited Brazil and emphasized the “necessity of keeping [the missionaries’] proselyting time sacred and not allowing other functions, including branch leadership, to interfere with their work.”²⁹⁷

President Bangerter had already been feeling that this was the best course of action, so he “established among the leading missionaries the principle that if you’re going to be in leadership, you’re to be first of all, a leader in proselyting. You’re going to produce beyond what the others do or you can’t be in leadership.”²⁹⁸ Though the missionaries resisted this new philosophy at first, they eventually became devoted to it and proselyting time became their sacred priority.²⁹⁹

Coinciding with this effort to have the elders spend more time proselyting, there was an effort to involve the members more in the work. In order for the missionaries to spend more time proselyting and less time with the day-to-day running of the branches, the members had to do

²⁹⁷ Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 176-177, 181.

²⁹⁸ Bangerter, interview, 2.

²⁹⁹ Bangerter, interview, 2; Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 176-177.

more. As stated earlier, more and more members were called into leadership positions during this era. Not only did the members take on more of the leadership responsibilities, but they also became heavily involved in other aspects of Church programs, especially social activities that had previously been hosted by missionaries. The members became the organizers and leaders of the activities, classes, and parties. For example, in November of 1966, the Relief Society hosted a successful bazaar, a demonstration that “when something is studied and planned, the effort is always rewarded.”³⁰⁰

President Bangerter also initiated several other changes in the missionary work program in Brazil. He taught the missionaries the importance of having the power of the Holy Spirit in their teaching, rather than teaching everything “in a robotic manner.”³⁰¹ Additionally, he changed the number of “discussions” or lessons that missionaries taught people before baptism. The mission had been following a seven-discussion plan, but he combined the first three lessons into one. He also made the lesson program more open, allowing the missionaries flexibility if they felt to change the number and sequence of the lessons.³⁰² The Book of Mormon was stressed as a useful resource for the missionaries. President Beck said: “I was a great believer in the use of the Book of Mormon to convert people to the Church, because that was *the tool*... We encouraged the missionaries to distribute a lot of them.”³⁰³ These changes in approach bore great fruit as the missionaries applied them in Rio de Janeiro.

Before discussing the success in Rio that came because of these changes, however, we will discuss some of the challenges the missionaries faced in trying to proselyte in Rio de Janeiro. First, the city of Rio is a unique city in all the world. While it was the government

³⁰⁰ Manuscript History of the Tijuca Branch, Report Submitted December 31, 1966, November 19, 1966.

³⁰¹ Bangerter, interview, 2.

³⁰² Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 195-196; Bangerter, interview, 2.

³⁰³ Beck, interview, 120, emphasis in the original.

capital city of Brazil for centuries, it also developed into a cultural capital as well. So, while São Paulo became the economic center of Brazil, Rio became the vacation center. The combination of being the seat of a government fraught with corruption and the center for tourists seeking pleasure turned Rio de Janeiro into a morally-relaxed city. When asked to describe the missionary work in Rio, President Hicken said missionaries struggled there because the city is “as worldly as they come.”³⁰⁴

Second, the major challenge missionaries faced in Rio, and many other parts of Brazil, related to the Church’s policy restricting men of black African descent from receiving the priesthood. During this era, the Church began expanding more and more into the northern areas of Brazil. With this expansion, the issue of the policy regarding “the lineage” became more and more prevalent because there were greater numbers of people of African descent in areas such as Recife, Salvador, São Luiz, Belém, Cuiabá, and Campo Grande.³⁰⁵ With this expansion, President Bangerter and his successors had to wrestle anew with the implications on missionary work of the policy restricting men of black African descent from holding the priesthood in Church congregations among an increasingly African demographic of people.

President Bangerter continued some of the practices his predecessors had followed, including encouraging the missionaries to discreetly determine whether their investigators had any African ancestry. One tactic the missionaries used was to show their investigators pictures of their own family and ask if they could see pictures of the investigators’ families.³⁰⁶ This policy of discreetly discovering the lineage was difficult for the missionaries and “one of the major

³⁰⁴ Hicken, interview, 66.

³⁰⁵ Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 169. President Bangerter said that the Church “had never done any work in the northern areas, which were composed of a somewhat heavier mixture of people who were of African descent,” but that he felt that we needed to explore and understand the possibilities in these areas. [Bangerter *Autobiography*, 217]

³⁰⁶ Clark, interview.

preoccupations of the Brazilian Mission.”³⁰⁷ Also, President Bangerter instructed the missionaries to not seek out people with black African ancestry. If someone with the lineage was interested enough to actively pursue investigating the Church, the missionaries would teach the people and prepare them for baptism. President Bangerter’s missionaries followed the policy of never baptizing anyone without first “telling them about the situation with the lineage.” In his experience, President Bangerter felt that “as long as [people] knew up-front” about the policy, feelings or testimonies weren’t hurt, whereas, if people later found out, they may feel the Church had been hiding something and turn against the Church.³⁰⁸ These were practices that missionaries in Brazil had followed for some time.

On the other hand, President Bangerter did initiate some practices that were very different from what the mission had done previously. President Sorensen had developed a lesson program based on various scriptures that was designed to show how to trace a person’s lineage. President Bangerter, however, felt that with Brazil’s complicated racial makeup, it was impossible to truly determine someone’s heritage. So, President Bangerter instructed the missionaries to simply ask the people if they had any African lineage. The people responded as honestly as they could, and the missionaries moved forward with their teaching.³⁰⁹

In Rio de Janeiro, the issue of the lineage was a significant challenge. Michael Benning, a young missionary who served in Rio de Janeiro in 1964, said that when he was proselyting in Rio, “a big problem was the priesthood and the restrictions on when it could be given.”³¹⁰ Elder Clark said that it was difficult for the missionaries, because they were challenged by the Church’s leaders to baptize potential priesthood holders, but they couldn’t actively pursue and

³⁰⁷ Bangerter, *Autobiography*, 169-170.

³⁰⁸ Bangerter, interview, 62-63.

³⁰⁹ Bangerter, interview, 8-9.

³¹⁰ Michael Benning, interview by the author, April 16, 2015.

baptize black men. Elder Clark felt this challenge was even more pronounced in Rio, because there were more people with black African ancestry there than in other places.³¹¹ With the priesthood restriction severely limiting the missionaries' teaching pool, President Hicken said it felt as though the missionaries were "working with one hand tied behind [their] back."³¹²

In spite of the challenge of the "worldly" nature of the city, and the limitations created by the priesthood policy, the Church in the area experienced incredible success during this period. The most glaring evidence of this is the incredible increase in the number of members of the Church in Rio de Janeiro and Niterói. In 1958 there were two branches and 128 members of the Church in Rio, and one branch and 42 members in Niterói. By 1968 there were three large branches in Rio, totaling 1,411 members, and one branch in Niterói, with 289 members. The Church in the area grew from exactly 170 total members in 1958 to exactly 1,700 in 1968, a tenfold increase in ten years, a testament to the success the missionaries had in Rio during this period of sustained growth.³¹³

The growth of the Church in the Rio de Janeiro area, and other regions further north, led to the 1968 creation of a third mission in Brazil, headquartered in Rio. Before this time, Brazil had been divided into two missions, the Brazilian South Mission, headquartered in Porto Alegre, which covered the southernmost region of Brazil, and the Brazilian Mission, headquartered in São Paulo, which covered the entire rest of the country. The Brazilian North Mission, with its mission office in Rio de Janeiro, essentially consisted of all the territory north of the state of São Paulo.³¹⁴ The creation of the Brazilian North Mission was a significant step for the Church in the city. A new mission was a sign that there was enough success in an area to merit receiving more

³¹¹ Clark, interview.

³¹² Hicken, interview, 62-63.

³¹³ Irving, "Numerical Strength of the LDS Church in Brazil," p. 5-8.

³¹⁴ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1968-1972, "Brazilian Mission" Section, July 7, 1968; Irving, "Numerical Strength of the LDS Church in Brazil," "User Index."

missionaries, as well as a new mission president focused entirely on that geographic area. It also signified that there was enough administrative infrastructure in the area that the city could become a center of Church strength.

The creation of the new mission had been anticipated for some time. When Elder Kimball visited Rio de Janeiro in 1964, he and President Beck discussed dividing the Brazilian mission into two separate missions.³¹⁵ As the time was approaching to finally create the new mission, President Hicken and others worked hard to prepare for the change. President Hicken selected a home for the mission president and his family, prepared a mission office staff, and informed the missionaries about the change.³¹⁶

On August 11, 1968, after years of preparation and growth, the new Brazilian North Mission was created at a special District Conference of the Rio de Janeiro District. President Hal Johnson, who had served as a young missionary in Brazil from 1940 to 1942, was sustained as the mission president.³¹⁷ The new mission's territory essentially included "all the territory of Brazil north of the state of São Paulo."³¹⁸ There were 465 people in attendance at the conference, probably the largest gathering of saints in the city of Rio de Janeiro to that point. One of the missionaries recorded that "this was one of the great spiritual occasions in Brazil."³¹⁹

When President Bangerter arrived in Brazil in 1958, he declared that it was the beginning of a "new era" of the Church in Brazil. This "new era" focused on establishing the "full order" of

³¹⁵ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1963-1964, "Mission Home and Office" Section, June 2, 1964.

³¹⁶ Hicken, interview, 80-81. Elder Spencer W. Kimball and Elder LeGrand Richards had consulted with President Hicken and asked him how he would divide the boundaries of the new mission. When the mission was created, there were 64 missionaries in the new mission.

³¹⁷ Hal R. Johnson, Hal R. Johnson Papers: 1919-2004, Folders 1 and 3, Church History Library.

³¹⁸ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1968-1972, "Brazilian Mission" Section, July 7, 1968.

³¹⁹ Manuscript History of the Tijuca Branch, Report Submitted December 31, 1968. This is the final entry in this manuscript history for 1968.

the Church in Brazil, which included the turning away from the North-American centric approach that was characteristic of previous eras. The Church in Brazil became more and more Brazilian. The same was certainly true in Rio de Janeiro. President Bangerter and his successors put forth concerted efforts to turn the Church in Rio over to native Brazilians. By 1968, the Church in the Rio area had primarily native branch presidents, and the Rio de Janeiro District was led by Brazilians. Their diligent efforts allowed the missionaries in Rio to focus on proselyting, which led to a tenfold increase in the numerical size of the Church in the area during this time. All of this combined to facilitate the creation of the new mission for all of northern Brazil, with its headquarters in Rio.

In 1967, Elder Spencer W. Kimball had told the mission presidents of South America that 1968 “would be a great new era and epoch of missionary work in the building of the Kingdom of God in South America.”³²⁰ Such was certainly the case for Rio de Janeiro, which became a center of Church strength as the local branches continued to experience growth in the area. Additionally, as the headquarters of the new Brazilian North Mission, the city coordinated the increased missionary efforts in northern Brazil during the pivotal years of Church growth leading up to the revelation on the priesthood in 1978. It is this pivotal era that we will discuss in our next chapter.

³²⁰ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1968-1972,

Chapter 5

Center of Church Strength (1968-1978)

In June of 1978, Helvécio Martins, a faithful black member of the Church in Rio de Janeiro, arrived home from work and found his wife, Rudá, talking with some of her friends. They were all clearly excited, and his wife cried to him as he came through the door: “I have news, amazing news.” Her friend had heard from someone in the United States of a shocking announcement from the Church. “The First Presidency just announced the prophet’s revelation: the priesthood will now be given to all men, regardless of race! Helvécio, you will hold the priesthood.”³²¹

Their phone rang a moment later and a friend from the United States confirmed the news and read the official Church declaration to him. Martins described what happened, saying: “I could not contain my emotions. Rudá and I went into our bedroom, knelt down, and prayed. We wept as we thanked our Father in Heaven for an event we had only dreamed about. The day had actually arrived, and in *our* mortal lives.” He and his young adult son, Marcus, received the priesthood two weeks later. Marcus and his fiancé postponed their wedding so Marcus could serve a mission, he being one of the first three black missionaries in the Church of the post-modern era. Almost twelve years later, and after much service in priesthood leadership positions, in March of 1990 Helvécio Martins was called as a member of the Church’s Second Quorum of Seventy. He was the first man of black African descent to serve as a General Authority after the priesthood ban was lifted.³²²

Helvécio Martins was one of many members of the Church whose lives was directly changed forever with this announcement. Many members and missionaries, especially in Brazil,

³²¹ Martins, *Autobiography*, 69.

³²² Martins, *Autobiography*, 69-73, 111-117.

had waited long for this promised day. The course of the Church in Brazil, and specifically in Rio, changed with this revelation and its subsequent consequences. At long last, the Church in Rio could fully include all Brazilians, and, in a sense, become truly Brazilian in its membership and leadership. In this chapter, we will examine the history of the Church in Rio de Janeiro from the time it became the headquarters of the new mission in 1968 until this revelation was announced in 1978. We will first examine the Church's growth in Rio, after becoming a center of Church strength in Brazil, including the creation of the first stake in the city. We will then survey the events leading up to the revelation on the priesthood, as well as the immediate consequences in the area.

Growth as a Center of Church Strength

Now that the Church had created a mission, with Rio as its headquarters, the city became a center of strength for the Church. While it took the Church in the city time to grow into this role, it wasn't long until it achieved the important milestone of creating a stake in Rio de Janeiro. As we will discuss later, forming a stake in Rio was a significant step for the local Church in the area to establish itself as Brazilian since it would no longer be under the jurisdiction of the mission president. Thus, as the Church in the city continued to grow, it was simultaneously becoming less North American and more Brazilian.

The Church in Rio did not, however, go through this period without difficulty. In fact, during the first couple years in its new role as a center of Church strength, the growth of the Church in the city halted. While it is unclear why this happened, there is some evidence that the members in the Rio area were struggling with disunity. Shortly after President Johnson arrived to oversee the new mission headquartered in Rio, he and his first counselor visited the Niterói

branch “to clear up some backbiting and other disturbances in the branch.”³²³ The Niterói Branch was not the only one struggling with conflict between members. Nearby Belo Horizonte also struggled with “distrust, gossip, failure to sustain leadership, etc.”³²⁴ Regardless what the reason was, the missionaries struggled to get baptisms during this first year and a half of the new mission. In fact, the missionaries in the Rio de Janeiro District felt that “baptisms had hit an all time low” in October of 1968.³²⁵

This lack of baptisms showed in the overall number of members of the Church in the area, which actually experienced a lack of growth during the period between 1968 and 1969. In 1968 there were 1,700 members of the Church in Rio de Janeiro and Niterói. By 1969 that number had decreased slightly to 1,697 members. Though these numbers, taken from local manuscript histories, may be influenced by such things as clerical errors, the removal of incorrect membership records, or people simply moving away from Rio, they still illustrate a significant shift in the trend the Church in the area had been experiencing. Over the previous thirteen years (1956-1968), the Church in Rio had averaged a 34% increase each year. The last time the Church had not increased was from 1955 to 1956, when the Church had decreased in size from 68 to 65 members.³²⁶ So, it had been over 10 years since the Church had struggled this much to grow from one year to the next.

Even during this challenging period, however, there were still some important successes, including the baptism of converts who became stalwart members. One of these was Nagib Dias,

³²³ Brazilian Mission Historical Reports: 1967-1981, Missionary District Histories, Niterói Missionary District, October 1968 Report, Church History Library. This collection also includes reports from the Brazilian North Mission, later known as the Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission.

³²⁴ Brazilian Mission Historical Reports: 1967-1981, Mission President’s Personal Report, August 25, 1968.

³²⁵ Brazilian Mission Historical Reports: 1967-1981, Missionary District Histories, Jardim Botânico Missionary District, October 1968 Report.

³²⁶ Irving, “Numerical Strength of the LDS Church in Brazil,” p. 8.

who learned of the Church through two acquaintances who were members. In the beginning, he didn't want to learn anything about the Church but, when he entered his first Church meeting, he said "it was the best thing that had happened" in his life. He and his wife were ultimately baptized on March 8, 1969 in the Tijuca chapel.³²⁷

Looking back, Nagib recalled that membership in the Church had its challenges at the time. He and his family lived in the Grajaú region of the city, which required them to walk four kilometers round trip for meetings each morning, and then walk it again for meetings later in the day; a total of eight kilometers each Sunday. Despite the distance, Nagib and his family loved being at the Church with other branch members. In fact, Nagib pointed out that at that time it was common for the branch members to be at the Church every night of the week, except Mondays. He said, "it was beautiful!" Over the course of his life, since being baptized into the Church, Nagib served as branch president twice and read the Book of Mormon over forty times.³²⁸ This is one example of the significant successes the Church experienced in the city, even during this challenging eighteen-month period.

During this difficult time from the last half of 1968 to 1970, the missionaries and members recognized that the work was not moving forward and responded proactively. In the Méier Branch, the missionaries and members held a special joint-fast for the success of their branch, specifically hoping to get a chapel in Méier. Also, President João Antônio Dias, the Rio de Janeiro District President, encouraged the members to become more involved in the

³²⁷ Nagib and Gilka Freira Dias, interview by Elder Norberto and Sister Rosângela Lopes, August to September 2010, transcript, p. 47-48, in Brazil Area Historical Record of the Church in Rio de Janeiro. As the Church in Rio de Janeiro continued to grow, the Tijuca Chapel became known as the Andaraí Chapel, referring more specifically to the region of Rio in which it is located.

³²⁸ Nagib and Gilka Dias, interview, 48-50. Nagib and his family lived in Rio for a time, and then moved to Brasília.

missionary work. He reminded them of their responsibility to help the missionaries in their efforts to contact new people to teach.³²⁹

Additionally, President Johnson put forth great effort to help improve work of his missionaries at this time. He changed the structure of the missionary leadership, and helped specific missionaries work through their health issues and spiritual challenges.³³⁰ He tried to help his missionaries be united in their missionary work, even holding zone conferences with the theme, “Be Ye Therefore One.”³³¹ One of his missionaries wrote to him saying that his “practical, human approach to problems” was of great help to the missionaries.³³²

Lastly, the missionary work received help at the end of the year with a “population explosion” in the number of missionaries in the Brazilian North Mission. In the month of December, 28 missionaries arrived, raising the total number of missionaries in Rio and the surrounding area to 72.³³³ Consequently, the tide turned, and the missionary work in Rio began once again to experience consistent growth by 1970. The local Church units in Rio grew from 1,697 members in 1969 to 2,095 members in 1970, a 24% increase. This growth continued over the next couple years. By 1974, that number had almost doubled to 4,135 members in the area.³³⁴

In 1970, President João Dias, who had been a fixture among the leadership of the Church in Rio for a decade, was released from his calling as district president just before he moved to

³²⁹ Brazilian Mission Historical Reports: 1967-1981, Missionary District Histories, Méier Missionary District, December 1968 Report.

³³⁰ Hal Johnson, Missionary Journal of Hal R. Johnson: 1968-1971, January 8, July 12, 1969, digitized copy in the possession of the author.

³³¹ Brazilian Mission Historical Reports: 1967-1981, “Brazilian North Mission” Section, December 1969 Report, March 25, 1969.

³³² Missionary Journal of Hal R. Johnson, July 14, 1969.

³³³ *O Desafio*, Brazilian North Mission Newsletters: 1967-1970, Brazilian North Mission, December 1969, p. 3, Church History Library. Until this influx of missionaries, President Johnson would, when necessary, send missionaries to President Hicken to cover areas of the Brazilian Mission, or request some from his mission.

³³⁴ Irving, “Numerical Strength of the LDS Church in Brazil,” p. 5-6, 8.

Recife. According to Brazilian Army regulations, President Dias could not remain in the same place for more than ten years. Thus, when he finished Command School in Rio, he chose Recife as his next assignment. In his own words, he had “started the Church in Rio,” but it was now time for him to pass on the work and responsibility to others.³³⁵ He was replaced as district president by Valdemar Cury, who had been serving as his counselor. President Cury called Odmarr Serrano Berqvist and José Delfino Barbosa Filho to serve as his counselors.³³⁶ A few months later, on July 8, 1971, President Johnson also completed his time in Rio, and was replaced by George Oakes, who became the new President of the Brazil North Mission.³³⁷

This period of growth of the Church in the area was also significant in another sense. Several future leaders in the Church, both in Rio and globally, were baptized during this time. One example is Hudson Carrano. He was baptized into the Tijuca Branch in the early 1970s, and then became the first bishop of the Tijuca Ward (formerly the Tijuca Branch) at the time of the creation of the Rio de Janeiro Stake.³³⁸ Another was Athos Amorim, who was baptized in July of 1972, and later served as a General Authority of the Church, assigned to the Second Quorum of Seventy from 1998 to 2002.³³⁹ Lastly, Helvécio Martins, whose leadership positions we will discuss in greater detail later in this chapter, was baptized during this period as well. He and his family joined the Church on June 2, 1972, and he also later became a General Authority.³⁴⁰

Four months after the Martins family was baptized, the Church achieved a significant milestone in its growth: the creation of the first stake in Rio de Janeiro. This had been the goal of

³³⁵ Dias, interview by Dahlin, 21-22.

³³⁶ Manuscript History of the Tijuca Branch, Report Submitted December 1970, December 13, 1970; Dias, interview by Williams, 12.

³³⁷ Johnson, Missionary Journal, July 8, 1971.

³³⁸ Hudson Carrano, interview by Mark Grover, São Paulo, SP, Brazil, March 31, 1982, transcript, p. 10, Mormonism in Brazil: Oral History Project.

³³⁹ Athos Amorim, interview by Mark Grover, Resende, RJ, Brazil, November 4, 2003, transcript, p. 19, 72-77, Mormonism in Brazil: Oral History Project.

³⁴⁰ Martins, *Autobiography*, 47.

the Church in the city for quite some time.³⁴¹ As the Church continued to develop in various areas of Brazil, each new region hoped to progress to the point where they could organize a stake in their area, as had been done in São Paulo. President Wayne M. Beck, who had presided over Brazil when the stake in São Paulo was created, said that the members and leaders in other areas of Brazil saw the creation of the São Paulo Stake and asked: “What’s necessary before we can also be organized into a stake?”³⁴²

Historians James Allen and Richard Cowan explained why the formation of a stake is an important milestone in the development of the Church in a certain area. They wrote:

Church leaders have pointed out that ‘stakehood’ is the ideal, the goal, for which every mission district is being prepared. Stakes cannot be organized until there is sufficient membership and trained leaders, the problems of distance and communication have been overcome, and the Church program is operating fully within the district. The organization of a stake in a given area represents not only growth in membership, but also a maturing in the full Church program and a development in spirituality.³⁴³

While organizing the Church in a given area into local branches and a supervising mission district may seem very similar to the organization of wards under the supervision of a stake, there is a critical difference. Whereas the mission district presidency is under the stewardship of the mission presidency, the stake presidency reports directly to the General Authorities from Church headquarters in Salt Lake City.

When President Kimball met with the leaders of the new stake in São Paulo years earlier, he said: “Until now you depended on the Brazilian mission, now you should turn your eyes toward Salt Lake City where you will receive directly the instructions received from the

³⁴¹ As stated in the last chapter, President Dias had established the organization of the stake as his great objective during his time as district president. [See Dias, interview by Elder and Sister Lopes, 28]

³⁴² Beck, interview, 94.

³⁴³ James B. Allen and Richard O. Cowan, *Mormonism in the Twentieth Century* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1964), 53.

mission.”³⁴⁴ As Mark Grover wrote, “the organization of the stake resulted in the elimination of one administrative level, the American-run mission,” essentially giving the Church in the area autonomy within the global Church. Hence, organizing a stake “represented an important step in the equalization” of the Church in a given area with the rest of the Church.³⁴⁵ In other words, while the stake leaders still reported to Church Headquarters in Salt Lake City, they had much greater power to run the local Church as they saw fit without having to defer to a mission president on simple day-to-day administrative efforts. The creation of the Rio de Janeiro Stake was one more step in the establishment of a truly Brazilian organization in Rio.

On the morning of October 22, 1972, approximately 2,300 people met for a Conference of the Rio de Janeiro District. Elder Bruce R. McConkie, newly called member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church, presided over the conference and the organization of the new Rio de Janeiro Stake. The stake included six wards in Rio and Niterói, as well as five smaller branches of the Church in Rio and other nearby cities.³⁴⁶ The wards in the Rio de Janeiro Stake were the Andaraí, Méier, Madureira, Tijuca, Jardim Botânico, and Niterói Wards. The branches located in Rio were the Irajá and Ilha do Governador Branches. Other branches in nearby cities were the São Gonçalo, Petrópolis, and Volta Redonda Branches.³⁴⁷ Valdemar Cury was called as the first Stake President with Antonio A. Costa and Oscar B. Carvalho as his counselors. Walmir

³⁴⁴ Spencer W. Kimball, Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1965-1966, “Meeting with the Mission Presidency with Members Interviewed and that Will Be Set Apart as Leaders in the First Stake Installed in South America,” May 1, 1966.

³⁴⁵ Grover, “Mormonism in Brazil,” 172-173. President Beck summarized the significance saying that organizing a stake “gives the supervision directly over to the local members.” [Beck, interview, 95]

³⁴⁶ Rio De Janeiro Brazil Stake Manuscript History and Historical Reports: 1972-1977, October 22, 1972, Church History Library; Walmir Silva, interview by Elder Norberto and Sister Rosângela Lopes, August to September 2010, transcript, p. 43, in Brazil Area Historical Record of the Church in Rio de Janeiro.

³⁴⁷ Rio de Janeiro Brazil Stake Manuscript History and Historical Reports: 1972-77, Folder 1, 1972 and 1976 Annual Reports.

Silva was called as the Stake Patriarch.³⁴⁸ President Cury described his counselors as men of “much faith... and a great will to do good work.”³⁴⁹



Left: President Cury (middle) and his counselors, Antônio A. Costa and Oscar B. Carvalho (the article did not clarify the position of either of the counselors).
Right: Elder Bruce R. McConkie (back, middle) and President George A. Oakes (back, left) with their wives and the youth of the choir that sang as part of the conference when the Rio de Janeiro Stake was formed [“Criada a Estaca do Rio de Janeiro” (“Rio de Janeiro Stake Created”), *A Liahona*, December 1972, 50].

President Cury and the stake leaders worked hard to find and train leaders in the new stake. He explained: “our goal was always to train the counselors to be the president.” He attributed the growth and success of the stake during his ten-year tenure to this goal of always seeking to train members to become the future leaders in the Church.³⁵⁰ They did, however, experience challenges in the administration of a growing Church. Bishop Hudson Carrano said that the greatest challenge he faced while serving in leadership positions in Rio was having so

³⁴⁸ Rio de Janeiro Stake Manuscript History and Historical Reports: 1972-1977, “Changes of Officials, Teachers, Members of the Assembly” (“Mudanças de Oficiais, Professores, e Membros da Junta”), 1972 Report; Waldir Silva, interview by Elder Norberto and Sister Rosângela Lopes, August to September 2010, transcript, p. 43, in Brazil Area Historical Record of the Church in Rio de Janeiro.

³⁴⁹ Valdemar Cury, interview by Elder Norberto and Sister Rosângela Lopes, August to September 2010, transcript, p. 62, in Brazil Area Historical Record of the Church in Rio de Janeiro.

³⁵⁰ Cury, interview, 62-63. President Valdemar Cury, the first stake president in Rio de Janeiro, later left the Church. Although the stake manuscript histories are silent on the matter, Athos Amorim, who we have already mentioned in this chapter, was an acquaintance of President Cury and gave some insight into the situation. He said: “Valdemar Cury was a good district president and stake president as well, but became greatly mixed up with his commercial and personal life. ... And, for this reason, he separated himself from the Church. ... What happened with him was a great disappointment, but it did not affect my life in the Church.” [Amorim, interview, 32-33]

little time to do all he wanted to do. He also felt that, despite all the training he received, he still struggled with the administrative elements of Church leadership, including the procedures surrounding the payment of tithing and record keeping.³⁵¹ Despite the struggles the members and missionaries faced, the Church in Rio continued to grow.

A short while later, in 1976, the Church in the area reached another milestone. The Rio de Janeiro Stake, after only 4 years of existence, was divided, creating the Niterói Stake. Once again, Elder Bruce R. McConkie, joined this time by Elder James E. Faust, an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve, returned to Brazil to establish the new stake with João Eduardo Kemeny as the new stake president. With the division, the Rio de Janeiro Stake, consisted of 2,746 members in eleven wards and branches, and the Niterói Stake had 2,933 members in eight wards and branches.³⁵² At the meeting, President Cury, who continued to serve as president of the Rio de Janeiro Stake, said: “I am happy today because ‘divide’ in our Church means ‘grow’ and I am certain that these two stakes will grow more and more.”³⁵³

There were other signs of maturation of the Church in the area. First, in 1975 the Church Education System (CES), a program designed to help youth and young adults learn Church scriptures and doctrine through weekday classes, became a permanent fixture in Rio. Alfred Orlando Terris Lima, a local member in Rio, was assigned to be the director of CES for Rio de

³⁵¹ Carrano, interview, 11-12.

³⁵² Rio de Janeiro Stake Manuscript History and Historical Reports: 1972-1977, September 17, 1976; “History of the South American East Area Office: July 9, 1975-December 27, 1978,” September 19, 1976, Church History Department, Church Office Building of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, São Paulo, SP, Brazil, digitized copy in the possession of Mark Grover. The wards and branches left in the Rio de Janeiro stake were the following: Andaraí, Meier, Engenho de Dentro, Madureira, Campo Grande, Irajá, Ilha do Governador, Ramos, Rezende, and Volta Redonda. The Niterói stake contained the Tijuca, Jardim Botânico, Niterói, São Gonçalo, Petrópolis, Teresópolis, Friburgo, and Juiz de Fora units.

³⁵³ Rio de Janeiro Brazil Stake Manuscript History, 1972-1977, Folder 1, 1976 Annual Report.

Janeiro and the surrounding states.³⁵⁴ Second, the public profile of the Church grew as the Young Ambassadors performing group from Brigham Young University were featured on national television on the Globo Television network, the largest media corporation in Brazil. The following night, they performed a special live presentation for approximately 500 members and investigators in Rio.³⁵⁵

As the member organizations experienced significant changes during this time, so did the mission itself. First, in 1974, President George Oakes was replaced as mission president by Gustav Salik, who served for less than a year before being transferred to preside over the Czechoslovakia Mission.³⁵⁶ He was replaced by Hélio da Rocha Camargo, a Brazilian member and convert who met the missionaries and was baptized in 1957 while attending a Methodist seminary and serving as a pastor.³⁵⁷ His call was the first time that both the members and missionaries in the city were presided over by Brazilians. Consequently, this marked a historic moment for the Church in Rio de Janeiro. From 1939, when the Church officially established its presence in Rio, there had always been an American overseeing the missionary work of the

³⁵⁴ Alfredo Orlando Terris Lima, interview by Elder Norberto and Sister Rosângela Lopes, August to September 2010, transcript, p. 88, in Brazil Area Historical Record of the Church in Rio de Janeiro.

³⁵⁵ Rio de Janeiro Stake Manuscript History and Historical Reports: 1972-1977, 1973 Annual Report, September 9, 1973. This performance is reminiscent of the Church's publicity efforts under President Howells. One key difference, however, is the level of emphasis the publicity activities received. Under President Howells, the mission expended significant time and energy into the basketball tours and other publicity-raising projects. With the Young Ambassadors musical group, the mission maintained its focus on proselyting, and the musical performance was merely a side benefit that allowed the Church to gain some extra publicity.

³⁵⁶ Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission Annual Historical Reports, Folder 2, 1985 Report, "Brazil Mission Presidents: 1935-1985," Church History Library; Hélio da Rocha Camargo, interview by Mark Grover, Resende, Rio de Janeiro, November 5, 2003, transcript, p. 5-6, Mormonism in Brazil: Oral History Project.

³⁵⁷ "Elder Helio R. Camargo of the First Quorum of the Seventy" *Ensign*, May 1985, seen online at <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1985/05/news-of-the-church/elder-helio-r-camargo-of-the-first-quorum-of-the-seventy?lang=eng> (accessed December 29, 2015).

Church in the area. That practice came to an end in 1975 when the Hélio da Rocha Camargo assumed responsibility for the Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission.

The congregations in Rio continued to grow steadily during President Camargo's tenure. The local members felt great pride, however, not only in the rapid growth of the Church in the area, but also in the quality of the membership. For example, Ricardo de Bittencourt Amarante was first introduced to the Church in 1970. He and his family moved frequently and, therefore, were involved in the Church in several different places, including Rio de Janeiro (where he served as a Bishop of the Méier Ward and as a counselor in the Rio de Janeiro Stake Presidency). He said that the Church members in Rio must have "had a strong inner drive" pushing it forward, "despite the difficulties of being a beach city with many attractions toward iniquity and other things." In spite of all these distractions, "still the members here remain firm." He attributed the Church's success in Rio to the strong testimonies of individual members.³⁵⁸ It was the determination of these Brazilian members that allowed the Church in the Rio area to rebound from initial difficulties, and to grow into its role as a center of Church strength in Brazil.

Blacks in the Church and the Priesthood Revelation

One of the most seminal events for the Church in the 20th century occurred in June of 1978, when it was announced that the priesthood would now be available to all worthy male members of the Church regardless of race (D&C Official Declaration 2). We will now turn our attention to an examination of the practices, events, and situation regarding the priesthood restriction and its effect on the Church in Rio de Janeiro, leading up to the 1978 revelation. We

³⁵⁸ Ricardo de Bittencourt Amarante, interview by Elder Norberto and Sister Rosângela Lopes, August to September 2010, transcript, p. 73-75, in Brazil Area Historical Record of the Church in Rio de Janeiro. Ricardo Amarante also served in Church callings in Curitiba, Brasília, Recife, Rio Grande do Sul, and other places before his family moved to Rio de Janeiro.

will then look at the reaction to the announcement, as well as the immediate aftermath for the Church in the area.

First, while it is difficult to quantify how much the priesthood restriction limited Church growth in Rio, missionaries serving during this period felt it was the greatest limiting factor. Looking back on his time as a young missionary serving in Rio, Doug Holt said: “we had our own artificial ceiling” in the city and, until the revelation on the priesthood, “we just didn’t get a critical mass big enough to build” a strong foundation. He also felt that the difficulties caused by the priesthood restriction were “the greatest factor limiting growth” in the city.³⁵⁹ Steve Clark, another young missionary at this time, tried to imagine what it would be like to serve in the area after the priesthood was extended. He said that “it had to be a great relief lifting that barrier for the Church there.”³⁶⁰

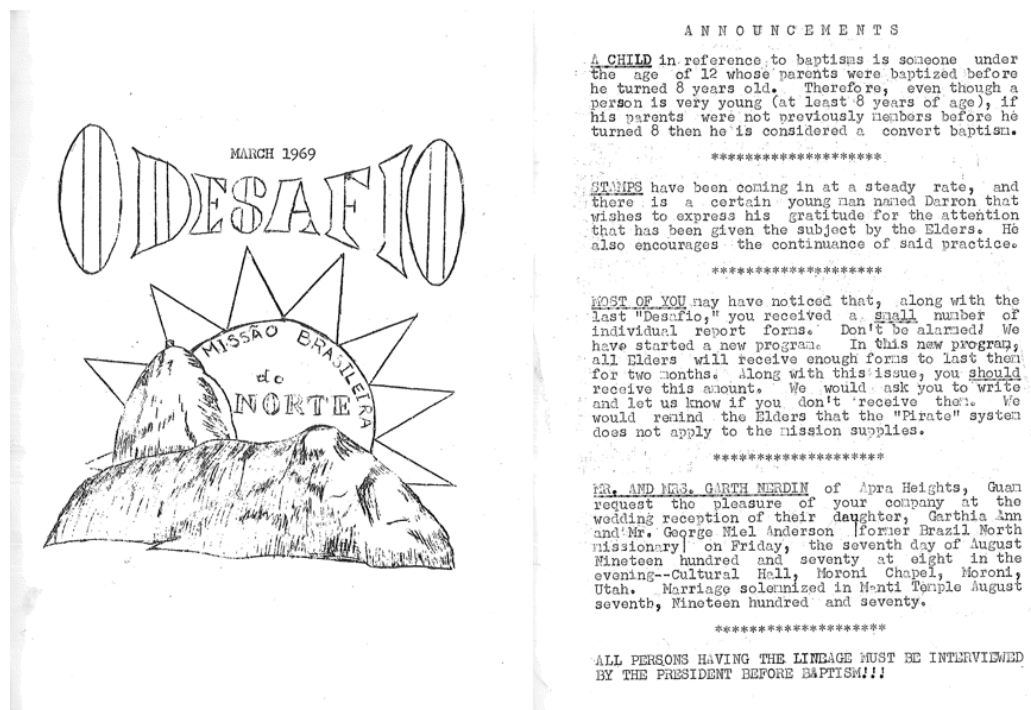
The priesthood ban had always been a complicated issue for the missionaries and mission presidents serving in Brazil. Each mission president approached the challenge differently, trying to work with these limitations as tactfully as possible. Comparing and contrasting the policies and practices of President Johnson and President Oakes provides a good example of how various mission presidents in Rio handled the restriction.

President Johnson was very strict and logical in his adherence to the priesthood policy, while still attempting to help the Church grow. Under President Johnson, the missionaries were instructed to handle the “lineage issue” in much the same way previous mission presidents had. They would try to discreetly determine a person’s racial heritage by showing pictures of their own families and asking to see photographs of the investigators’ families. The missionaries would also look for visual clues, such as the line demarcating the pigmentation on the side of the

³⁵⁹ Doug Holt, phone interview by the author, May 7, 2015.

³⁶⁰ Clark, interview.

individual's hand, or whether the features of the person's nose were European or African. Those whom the missionaries suspected had black African heritage were simply invited to Church.³⁶¹ If the people took the initiative to come to Church, then the missionaries would teach them and prepare them for baptism. If a person desired baptism, President Johnson personally interviewed them before baptism.³⁶²



The front cover (left) and announcements page (right) of *O Desafio*, the newsletter for the Brazilian North Mission. The announcements page contains instructions regarding the baptismal interviews for those of black African descent [*O Desafio*, March 1969].

One example of President Johnson's logical approach and strict adherence to the policy is the mission office's instruction to the missionaries regarding teaching people of Arab descent.

³⁶¹ Doug Holt, phone interview by the author, April 15, 2015.

³⁶² *O Desafio*, August 1970, 3. The bottom of the announcements page of the missionary newsletter published by the mission office and distributed to all the missionaries contained the following phrase in all capital letters, followed by three exclamation points: "ALL PERSONS HAVING THE LINEAGE MUST BE INTERVIEWED BY THE PRESIDENT BEFORE BAPTISM!!!" In his diary, President Johnson wrote of these interviews with people that had "the lineage." [See Johnson, *Missionary Journal*, July 27, 1969]

They referred to these people as “Moors.” In response to the question, “Is the Moor blood associated with the lineage of Cain?,” the mission newsletter said:

The Moors are descendants from the Berbers. The Berbers history goes back into Egyptian history to 1700 B.C. They are a white race. Came from Egypt into Spain and lived there as an entity for approximately 700 years. Portugal was made by a division of Spain and is relatively a new nation. Coming from Arabic descent they would more likely be descendants of Ishmael. The name Moor is anglicized from the term Mauri meaning nomad. Many Egyptian monuments and inscriptions mention the Berbers. The Berbers were made captives by other Arabic tribes so the descendant would be about the same as far as inter-marriage is concerned. There is no association with the negro unless it might have been recent. They are of true Arabic descent.³⁶³

This is one example of President Johnson’s missionaries being instructed on an exact procedure that follows a strict, logical approach regarding the priesthood restriction.

President Oakes used a more relaxed approach, however; worrying less about strict adherence to the policy and, rather, emphasizing the importance of teaching as many people as possible. Doug Holt served under both President Johnson and President Oakes. He described President Oakes’s policy as simply “teach everybody. Teach them how to pray, teach about God’s love... Invite them to Church and if they come, explain the lineage to them.” He said that, under President Oakes, the mission was “continually teaching black people.” President Oakes sought to engender the spirit of love in his missionaries as they taught as many investigators as possible, and worried about the priesthood restriction at the appropriate time.³⁶⁴

There were some practices, however, that several mission presidents followed. One of these was the policy of ensuring that investigators received what was called the “lineage lesson” following the other standard lessons, and before baptism.³⁶⁵ The lesson outline followed the

³⁶³ *O Desafio*, March 1970, 12.

³⁶⁴ Holt, interview by the author, April 15, 2015.

³⁶⁵ Jeff Barneck, interview by the author, Taylorsville, UT, May 19, 2015. Barneck served from 1973 to 1975, and remembered teaching the lineage lesson to everyone during his time. It is unclear if the lesson continued after 1975 and until the lifting of the ban. It is thought that the lesson was written by President Johnson and his missionary assistants [See Craig Johnson (President Johnson’s son who was in

same format as other lessons, with a teaching script provided, as well as questions to ask the investigators. This lesson, however, focused on the principles related to the priesthood policy. The lesson began by teaching that revelation from God through the prophet guides the Church, and that a man must be called of God to receive the priesthood. The missionaries would then explain to the investigators that God revealed anciently that the lineage of Cain could not hold the priesthood, and that “negros still could not.”³⁶⁶

The lesson outline then called for the missionaries to read two statements taken from a letter from the First Presidency. The first indicated: “from the beginning of this dispensation, Joseph Smith and all the successive Presidents of the Church have taught that the negros, while spirit children of a common Father, and descendants of our earthly parents Adam and Eve, will still not receive the priesthood for reasons that we believe are known to God, but that He has not made plain to man.”³⁶⁷ The second statement came from President David O. McKay: “Sometime in God’s eternal plan, the Negro will be given the right to hold the priesthood.”³⁶⁸ Shortly after

his late teens during his dad’s time as mission president), interview by the author, South Jordan, UT, May 30, 2015.], and approved by the General Authority over Brazil at the time. [See Holt, interview, May 7, 2015] Neither of these points, however, have been confirmed.

³⁶⁶ “Lineage Lesson” outline, in Jeff Barneck’s Personal Mission Documents. A copy of this document has been included in Appendix A.

³⁶⁷ As stated in the introductory chapter of this work, the Church now officially states that during Joseph Smith’s time, men of black African descent were ordained to the priesthood, and that “there is no reliable evidence that any black men were denied the priesthood during Joseph Smith’s lifetime.” The Church also acknowledges that the priesthood restriction actually began during the time of Brigham Young. [“Race and the Priesthood,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng> (accessed January 9, 2016)]

³⁶⁸ “Lineage Lesson” outline, in Jeff Barneck’s Personal Mission Documents. As stated in the opening chapter, the quote attributed to David O. McKay can be found in Llewelyn McKay, ed. *Home Memories of President David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1956), 231. It was later republished as part of a larger letter from David O. McKay, in William E. Berrett, “The Church and the Negroid People” in John J. Stewart, *Mormonism and the Negro* (Logan, UT: Bookmark Division of Community Press Publishing Company, 1960), 18-23.

reading these statements, the missionaries would ask the investigator if they believe that God will reveal “His will concerning His priesthood to the prophets.”³⁶⁹

The lesson outline then instructed the missionaries to ask direct questions of the investigators regarding their racial heritage and their future commitment to the Church. First: “Do you have any ancestors that were black or descendants of black?” Then: “If in the future, you discover that one of your ancestors was black, will you notify your branch president?” Lastly: “Do you think that in this case you will remain firm in the Church and in your covenants with God?”³⁷⁰ While this lineage lesson may seem ignorant or offensive to the modern reader, for a mission trying to implement a difficult policy in a racially diverse country, it would have fulfilled its purpose. The lesson effectively made every potential member of the Church at that time aware of the policy and, assuming people answered the questions truthfully, safeguarded the Church and missionaries from breaking the priesthood ban.

Not only did the priesthood restriction create difficulties for the missionaries in Rio, but also for some of the members. Antonio Landellino de Barros, who was baptized in 1968, said: “at that time, there was a lot of racism” in the Church. He also said that he did not like the explanations people gave for the priesthood restriction, including the reference to the biblical curse of Cain story. Antonio’s negative perceptions are especially interesting since he was a faithful Church member, and not someone whom people would think would naturally be critical of the Church.³⁷¹ So, even some strong, active members of the Church struggled with the priesthood policy and its implications.

³⁶⁹ “Lineage Lesson” outline, in Jeff Barneck’s Personal Mission Documents.

³⁷⁰ “Lineage Lesson” outline, in Jeff Barneck’s Personal Mission Documents.

³⁷¹ Antonio Landellino de Barros, interview by Elder Norberto and Sister Rosângela Lopes, August to September 2010, transcript, p. 85, in Brazil Area Historical Record of the Church in Rio de Janeiro. Antonio never clarified who he felt racism from; whether it was specific individuals, the local Church, or the Church in general. Additionally, while he said that he “never agreed” with such theories as

Other devoted members, however, said they did not feel any prejudice or racism in the Church during this time. Helvécio Martins said that he and his family were never treated poorly by Church members, and he and his son were always invited to participate in classes with other males their same age, even though they could not perform priesthood ordinances. He stated that he and his family “never had any problems... never had the slightest difficulty.”³⁷² The fact that some of the active members of the Church felt that it had incredibly negative effects, while others felt no prejudice at all, is evidence of how controversial this priesthood policy could be. It also may be evidence that this issue was dealt with differently in the various branches in Rio. While some branches and members may have behaved without racism, others may have struggled.

In June of 1978, this great barrier was lifted. After months of study, deliberation, questions, and frequent solitary visits to the temple, President Spencer W. Kimball received a revelation that the time had come to extend the priesthood to all worthy male members.³⁷³ After other members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve prayed together in the Salt

the “story of Cain and other similar explanations” for the restriction, he did not clarify from whom he was hearing these explanations. While the story of Cain was referenced in the “lineage lesson” the missionaries taught, he seems to be referring to more than that single instance. Later, Antonio served as a counselor in a branch presidency, as well as bishop multiple times.

³⁷² Helvécio Martins and Ruda Tourinho de Assis Martins, interview by Mark Grover, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, April 18, 1982, transcript, p. 21-22, Mormonism in Brazil: Oral History Project.

³⁷³ Kimball, “Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on the Priesthood,” 44-59. President Kimball met with the rest of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve in the Salt Lake Temple on June 1, 1978. He asked them to join with him in seeking confirmation of his tentative decision to extend the priesthood to all worthy male members of the church. They discussed it for two hours, all speaking in favor of the change. Then, all that were present gathered in a prayer circle and President Kimball asked for a manifestation from the Lord that this was right. During that prayer, those present felt a powerful spiritual sensation that confirmed to them this was the right course of action. Elder L. Tom Perry described the experience saying: “While he was praying, we had a marvelous experience. We had just a unity of feeling. The nearest I can describe it is that it was much like what has been recounted as happening at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. I felt something like the rushing of wind. There was a feeling that came over the whole group. When President Kimball got up he was visibly relieved and overjoyed.” They moved forward with the change, drafting a letter announcing the revelation. [Kimball, “Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on the Priesthood,” 55-60]

Lake Temple, and felt the revelation came from God, they announced it to the world. Church leaders drafted an official letter that was read to the media at a press conference on June 9th. It stated: “[God] has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, ... and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple” (D&C Official Declaration 2).

This announcement was received with shock, gratitude, and joy throughout the world; especially in the city of Rio de Janeiro. In a June 10th missionary meeting in Vitória, a city a little over 300 miles from Rio, President Camargo told the missionaries that President Kimball had received a revelation for all men regarding the priesthood. President Camargo explained to his missionaries how this policy change was an example of how the Lord uses revelation to guide His children.³⁷⁴ The announcement was significant enough that multiple Brazilian periodicals printed stories about the Church’s announcement, including the nationwide weekly news magazine, *Veja*. The headline read: “Racial Revelation: The Mormons Now Accept Negroes into the Priesthood.”³⁷⁵

Missionaries in the Rio area also recognized the magnitude of the revelation. Ron Dannenberg was a young, white, Brazilian convert to the Church who was serving in the Rio de Janeiro Mission in 1978. He was working in Niterói when the announcement was made, but was transferred to an area in the city of Rio de Janeiro shortly thereafter. He immediately recognized that the revelation would change the whole course of the Church in Brazil. He felt that if

³⁷⁴ Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission Annual Historical Reports, 1978 Report, June 10, 1978.

³⁷⁵ “Revelação Racial: Os mórmons agora aceitam negros no sacerdócio,” *Veja*, July 5, 1978, included in Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission Annual Historical Reports, “Anexos da História da Missão,” July 1978 Report. The missionaries in Belém, in northern Brazil, also recorded that *O Liberal*, a local newspaper, included the report from the Associated Press regarding the announcement. [See Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission Annual Historical Reports, June 13, 1978]

President Kimball had not extended the priesthood to all worthy male members, the Church would have been forced to close northern Brazil because the racial mixture there was so great that there would have been no way to determine whether someone had black African or Brazilian native heritage.³⁷⁶

Less than a month after the revelation, Max L. Shirts arrived in Brazil. He had been called to replace President Camargo as president of the Rio de Janeiro Mission. Upon his arrival, he held a meeting with the mission office staff, in which he said that the revelation on the priesthood made him “immensely happy” for Rio and northern Brazil. He said that “the Lord made this happen.”³⁷⁷ Whether they were members, such as Helvécio Martins, or missionaries, like Elder Dannenberg, the people associated with the Church in Rio de Janeiro were excited about the wonderful opportunities now available to all people in that part of the world.

The immediate aftermath of the revelation illustrates how influential the opening of the priesthood was in Rio de Janeiro and the surrounding area. The Church in the region continued to grow very rapidly and, in less than a year, another stake in the city of Rio de Janeiro was created. On May 20, 1979, Elder David B. Haight visited the city and presided at a conference in the Tijuca chapel. The two stakes in Rio and Niterói were reorganized to create the third stake, the Rio de Janeiro Andaraí Stake³⁷⁸ Then, a couple months later, the Rio de Janeiro Mission had grown sufficiently large that it was divided as well, creating the Brazil Recife Mission.³⁷⁹ In the years after the revelation, the Church would continue its rapid growth in this region of the world.

³⁷⁶ Ron Dannenberg, interview by the author, Provo, UT, March 17, 2015. In the interview, Dannenberg said that he believes that the Church in Brazil has been as benefitted as the Church on the African continent because of the confusion and complications caused by the racial mixture of the Brazilian populace in northern Brazil.

³⁷⁷ Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission Annual Historical Reports, June 29, 1978.

³⁷⁸ Brazilian Mission Historical Reports: 1967-1981, Volta Redonda Report, May 20, 1979.

³⁷⁹ Brazilian Mission Historical Reports: 1967-1981, “Histórico da Missão,” July 1979; Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission Annual Historical Reports, 1985 Report, “Brazil Mission Presidents: 1935-1985.”

While it is important to see the effects of the priesthood revelation on the Church in a large geographic area, sometimes it can be even more instructive to look at the effect it had on a single family. Helvécio Martins and his family had been searching for meaning in their lives when they met the missionaries. They attended Church meetings, enjoyed their experiences with Church members, and were baptized in 1972, recognizing that they would not be able to hold the priesthood.³⁸⁰ Though Martins received a patriarchal blessing and counsel in a conversation with President Kimball that seemed to hint that he would receive the priesthood and temple blessings in his lifetime, he and his wife had “never harbored expectations that any sort of change or revelation would occur during [their] mortal lives.”³⁸¹ When the priesthood revelation did come, however, it altered their lives immensely. Within a few weeks after the announcement, Martins and his son were ordained first to the Aaronic, then Melchizedek Priesthoods.³⁸²

Martins was shortly thereafter called to various priesthood leadership positions. In 1979, he was called to serve as the first counselor in the new Rio de Janeiro Andaraí Stake. After a little over two years in the stake presidency, Martins was released from that position to serve as bishop of his home ward in Rio, the Tijuca Ward. Then, near the end of June in 1987, Martins and his family left Rio de Janeiro for Fortaleza, where he served as mission president for three years. Lastly, Martins was called to serve as a General Authority of the Church, being sustained

³⁸⁰ Martins, *Autobiography*, 47. Martins said that he had heard there was racism in the Church, so he asked the missionaries about it as they started their first lesson with his family. They proceeded to essentially teach him the “lineage lesson,” after which he continued to ask questions. They taught the family until late into the night. Martins said: “none of our questions was left unanswered.” [Martins, interview, 11]

³⁸¹ Martins, *Autobiography*, 61, 63, 66.

³⁸² Martins, *Autobiography*, 61, 70. Though Martins had received a patriarchal blessing, and counsel in a conversation with President Kimball that seemed to hint that he would receive the priesthood and temple blessings in his lifetime, he and his wife had “never harbored expectations that any sort of change or revelation would occur during [their] mortal lives.” [Martins, *Autobiography*, 61, 63, and 66]

as a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy at the April 1990 General Conference of the Church.³⁸³



Helvécio and Rudá Martins with their children in front of the Rio de Janeiro stake center in 1978 [Martins, *Autobiography*, 55].

For the Martins family, the most important consequence of the priesthood revelation was that the family could now receive the blessings of the temple, including having their family sealed together forever. LDS Church doctrine teaches that married couples and families can be together for this life and the life hereafter when they are sealed in the temple by someone having proper priesthood authority. On November 6, 1978, shortly after the São Paulo Temple was dedicated, Helvécio and Rudá Martins were sealed together as a couple. They were then sealed to their four children. Helvécio wrote that he will never forget the moment when the whole family knelt around the ceremonial altar in the temple and were declared to be sealed together for all eternity. He described the experience as being “overwhelmingly beautiful.”³⁸⁴ Elder Martins’s life and the lives of his family members were never the same after the priesthood was extended

³⁸³ Martins, *Autobiography*, 81-85, 90, 98, 111-115.

³⁸⁴ Martins, *Autobiography*, 78.

to all worthy males. This is but one example of the effect this revelation had on the individuals and families in the Church in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

This period was marked by several significant milestones for the Church in Rio, as that city began to become a pillar for the Church in Brazil. Each step helped the local congregations and missionaries in the city become more native as they were increasingly led directly by Brazilians. As noted above, after creating the headquarters of the new mission in 1968, the Church established a stake in Rio de Janeiro in 1972, with a Brazilian presidency presiding over the stake. Then, three years later, for the first time in the history of the Church in the area, a Brazilian was called to serve as mission president with stewardship over the missionary work in the city.

While these were both important and remarkable steps for the Church in that part of Brazil, it still could not be considered a fully native church because of a restriction that was based on a concept of race that was not Brazilian. Only when the priesthood was extended to every worthy male member, regardless of race, did the largest barrier to the Church's growth fall and the Church become a truly Brazilian organization.³⁸⁵ Because the Church was founded in the United States, and the headquarters remains in that country, there will always be elements of the local Church congregations in Rio de Janeiro that are innately American. During this time, however, the leadership, members, and policies of the Church in Rio became Brazilian as the city simultaneously became a center of foundational strength for the Church.

³⁸⁵ I refrain from any judgments regarding whether the priesthood ban was "right" or "wrong." There will be a larger discussion on that topic in the conclusion of this thesis.

Chapter 6

“Ever Onward”

In 1985, Doug Holt, who had served as a young missionary in Rio de Janeiro in the early 1970s, returned to Brazil. During his trip, he visited many of the areas in which he had worked as a missionary. One of these areas was Petrópolis, a city situated in the mountains about forty miles outside of Rio de Janeiro. Though missionaries from Rio had first arrived there in 1957, thirteen years later the local branch still struggled with with a limited number of members and a lack of solid leadership.³⁸⁶

When Holt returned there in the mid-1980s, President Antonio Mendonça, the president of the Petrópolis Stake, escorted him around the area to show how the Church had grown during this relatively short period of time. The evidence of growth was incredible. Three chapels had been built, and a stake organized.³⁸⁷ As he visited the church buildings, Holt saw on the walls pictures of local members who had struggled during his time, but were now strong members who had served missions and returned to become Church leaders. During his visit to the last of the three chapels, he broke down and wept. Holt explained his tears, saying: “I [couldn’t] believe the Church [had] done so well.”³⁸⁸

As Elder Holt’s experience illustrates, the Church in the area immediately surrounding Rio continued to grow at an incredible rate after the revelation on the priesthood. By 2016, the

³⁸⁶ Manuscript History of the Brazilian Mission: 1953-1957, “Petrópolis Branch” Section, January 11, 1957; Holt, interview, May 7, 2015.

³⁸⁷ Brazil South Area annual historical reports: 2000, 2003-2004, “Current Stakes and Districts and their Origins,” 2004 Report, p. 142.

³⁸⁸ Holt, interview, May 7, 2015.

Church had ten stakes in the metropolitan area and a total of fifteen in the state of Rio, and a temple was being built in the city.³⁸⁹



Map of the location of all the current stakes in the state of Rio de Janeiro [Temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Rio de Janeiro Brazil Temple: Site Photographs,” <http://www.ldschurchtemples.com/riodejaneiro/construction/> (accessed January 26, 2016)].

As this thesis has suggested, as long as the Church in Rio was American in its language, membership, leadership, and culture, it struggled to grow. Only as it became more Brazilian did it begin to increase significantly in size and strength. This transformation came through such notable steps as the translation of the Book of Mormon into Portuguese, and the transition to proselyting in that native language. It was also facilitated by the shift away from proselyting methods that emphasized the North American origins and practices of the Church, and by

³⁸⁹ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “LDS Maps,” <https://www.lds.org/maps/#l=40.71992,-111.235219&z=13&m=google.road&q=Rio de Janeiro, Brazil> (accessed Jan 23, 2016).

teaching people the universal principles of the gospel. Using native Brazilians as the leaders in the local congregations of the city, and extending the priesthood and temple blessings to those of black African descent, also caused the Church in the area to grow dramatically.

In an October 2003 General Conference of the Church, Elder Dallin H. Oaks, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said the following:

The present-day servants of the Lord do not attempt to make Filipinos or Asians or Africans into Americans. The Savior invites all to come unto Him (see 2 Ne. 26:33; D&C 43:20), and His servants seek to persuade all—including Americans—to become Latter-day Saints. We say to all, give up your traditions and cultural practices that are contrary to the commandments of God and the culture of His gospel, and join with His people in building the kingdom of God.³⁹⁰

In other words, missionaries and members do not seek to convert people to the cultural practices of the United States of America but, rather, to the Church of Jesus Christ. As leaders have guided the Church according to the experience and knowledge they gained and the revelation they received, they have moved away from creating Americans through their missionary efforts, and instead have focused on creating members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Because the Church was established in the United States, maintains its headquarters there, and has Americans serving in many of its senior leadership positions, there will continue to be elements of the Church that are innately American. For the most part, however, the Church in recent decades has striven, whenever the doctrine of the Church will allow it, to make its message and practices more universal and acceptable to people from all societies around the globe.

We may rightly conclude that the Church has learned from its experiences in Brazil; especially Rio de Janeiro. Over sixty years before Elder Oaks made the aforementioned statement, the first missionaries arrived in Rio to open it to the gospel. The diligent, sincere men

³⁹⁰ Dallin H. Oaks, “Repentance and Change,” *Ensign*, November 2003, 39.

and women who began the Church in the city did their best to lay a foundation, and those who have followed have contributed in their own ways to that process. In the early days of the Church in the Rio de Janeiro area, the North American missionaries were in charge of every element of the local congregations and, at times, their proselyting even emphasized the “American-ness” of the Church. Over the years since, however, mission leaders learned better ways to conduct their work, consistently improving their policies and practices. To use a scriptural phrase, the Church, like all organizations, learned “line upon line” (Isaiah 28:10), one step at a time.

It is important, then, to recognize that, even though the work of the early missionaries may seem strange or misguided compared to those of later years, we should not criticize what they did. Rather, we should recognize their efforts as necessary steps on the Church’s journey to discover the most effective ways to spread the gospel in a foreign land and culture. Church leaders and missionaries today try to allow people from every culture to maintain all the elements of their heritage that do not contradict the principles of the gospel. In a way, Rio de Janeiro served as a great location for the Church to practice this approach, ultimately learning through trial and error the best proselyting practices and administrative policies to help the Church in a foreign, urban area.

As this study draws to a close, it is also important to caution against reaching conclusions that should not be drawn from this research. I recognize that this work repeatedly touches on a subject in Mormon History that is felt by many to be controversial: namely, race and the Church. This thesis has shown that race was a complicated, sensitive issue for the Church in Rio. We have examined numerous examples of missionaries and members attempting to be tactful and careful as they tried to both follow this priesthood restriction, while seeking to bring more people

into the Church. We have seen that, as long as it was in effect, the priesthood ban was a significant factor limiting the numerical growth of the Church in the Rio de Janeiro area.

What we have not sought to do here, however, is to make a judgment call as to whether the priesthood restriction was right or wrong for the Church. Some may attempt to claim that, because the restriction limited numerical growth, it was inherently wrong. However, that may or may not be true. It is impossible to declare such with any finality the rightness or wrongness, because we cannot know all the relevant information. We cannot perfectly understand the reasons behind the policy. Nor can we comprehend what underlying and unseen benefits the restriction may have produced. We also cannot know if God was behind it, or if it was simply a creation of men that God merely allowed to happen. These, and many other unanswerable questions, make it impossible for this thesis to declare the correctness or incorrectness of the priesthood ban. This work, instead, focuses on presenting the issues and challenges associated with race and the Church.

All in all, this thesis has presented an overview history of the Church in Rio de Janeiro; a history that covers more than four decades. Because of the broad scope of this work, I acknowledge that there are many topics, people, and events that deserve more attention than this work can give. My hope is that this study will lead to more work on the history of the Church in that part of the Lord's vineyard. The greatest current need in Rio, as it relates to the Church's history there, would be to have historians work locally to do extensive interviews with influential members, and also find sources (e.g., photos, diaries, etc.) that may soon be lost to history. Once this is accomplished, scholars can do even more to greatly expand on the small work that has been presented here. The Church moves swiftly and steadily forward and, if we do not make the

effort to gather and tell this history, Church members in Rio may find themselves in a religion without even knowing how it came to be in their fair city.

At the 1836 dedication of the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith prayed: “whatsoever city thy servants shall enter, and the people of that city receive their testimony, let thy peace and thy salvation be upon that city; that they may gather out of that city the righteous, that they may come forth to Zion, or to her stakes, the places of thine appointment, with songs of everlasting joy” (D&C 109:39). Over a century later, these servants first arrived in the city of Rio de Janeiro, hoping to gather the righteous and establish Zion in the area so that people could add “songs of everlasting joy” to the music of that exciting city.

In the four decades after its introduction in that part of Brazil, the Church in Rio grew and developed, ultimately becoming a center of strength. Shortly after the priesthood was extended, the Rio de Janeiro Mission grew sufficiently large that it was divided into two missions. President Max Shirts, the mission president in Rio at the time, tried to encourage his missionaries to continue to give their all to the work in which they were involved. He drew on some of the familiar words of a well-known LDS hymn, excitedly urging them: “Onward, missionaries, ever onward. This is your mission.”³⁹¹ Decades after President Shirts’s call to action, the Church continues to move onward as the city prepares for the construction of a sacred temple to be built in this majestic region. Church members and missionaries in Rio de Janeiro can now stand on the foundation of the past, and eagerly look to the future, as the call continues to ring, and the faithful continue to sing for God’s work to press onward, “ever onward.”

³⁹¹ President Shirts and the Mission Historian, Brazilian Mission Historical Reports: 1967-1981, “Mission History” (*Histórico da Missão*) Section, July 1979. The phrase, “ever onward” is taken from the popular LDS missionary hymn, “Called to Serve.” [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Hymns* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), Hymn #249]

APPENDIX A: "Lineage Lesson" Outline

["Lineage Lesson" outline, in Jeff Barneck's Personal Mission Documents.]

LINEAGE LESSON Brazil North Mission December, 1970

Depois de confirmar os compromissos anteriores com o investigador, prossiga com o seguinte diálogo.

Nós temos explicado alguns ensinamentos maravilhosos do evangelho e da Igreja de Jesus Cristo. Um princípio muito importante da Igreja de Jesus Cristo é que ela é guiada sempre por revelação. Vamos ler o que Cristo disse sobre revelação em sua Igreja. Lê Mat. 16:15-17.

De acordo com o versículo 17, como é que Pedro soube que Cristo era o filho de Deus?

-Resposta-

Sim, Pedro recebeu revelação de Deus. Até aquela data os homens diziam que Cristo era João Batista, ou Jeremias, ou um outro profeta. Mas o que Pedro recebeu que deu a ele a certeza enquanto os outros estavam errados?

-Resposta-

Perfeitamente. Revelação é tão importante que o próprio Cristo explicou que a Sua Igreja seria edificada sobre o princípio de revelação. O senhor quer ler o versículo 18? O senhor acha que Cristo edificaria Sua Igreja Eterna sobre um homem mortal?

-Resposta-

Uma igreja fundada ou dependente de Pedro ou de qualquer outro homem seria a igreja de Pedro ou a igreja de qualquer outro homem. Mas de quem era a igreja que Cristo organizou?

-Resposta-

Neste versículo Cristo deve estar falando sobre alguma coisa eterna sobre a qual ele edificaria Sua Igreja. E este é o mesmo princípio eterno mencionado no versículo 17. Que princípio é este?

-Resposta-

1. A Igreja de Jesus Cristo é edificada sobre a pedra de revelação.

Exatamente. Cristo explicou a seus apóstolos que Ele edificaria Sua Igreja sobre a pedra de revelação. Na sua opinião, Irmão Nunes, o que quer dizer revelação?

Resposta-

Nós podemos dizer, então, que revelação é comunicação entre Deus e seus servos aqui na terra. E por que revelação é tão importante?

-Resposta-

Vamos ler em Atos um exemplo de revelação dada para guiar a Igreja Anticamente. Lê Atos 13:2-3. Como foram chamados Barnabé e Saulo para o ministério?

-Resposta-

Vamos ver um outro exemplo de revelação na Igreja primitiva. Nos primeiros dias da Igreja o evangelho era pregado somente aos judeus. Mas Pedro teve um sonho no qual ele foi mandado para ir e pregar a uma família de gentios. Isto causou alguns conflitos na Igreja, mas quando Pedro explicou que ele tinha sido mandado por Deus para pregar aos gentios, a Igreja aceitou este novo ensinamento. Por que eles aceitaram este ensinamento?

-Respo: -

Então sobre qual princípio foi fundada e guiada A Igreja Primitiva?

Resposta-

E porque tem que ser assim ainda hoje?

-Resposta-

2. Tudo que A Igreja faz e ensina é por revelação.

Quando a Igreja foi restaurada quem foi chamado por Deus para receber revelação para a Igreja?

-Resposta-

Mas depois que O Profeta Joseph Smith foi martirizado será que a Igreja ficou sem orientação divina?

-Resposta-

Então o que fez Deus?

-Resposta-

Desde o tempo de Joseph Smith sempre tem havido profetas sobre a terra. Como Deus diz em Amós 3:7, "Certamente O Senhor Deus não fara coisa alguma, sem primeiro revelar o seu segredo aos seus servos, os profetas." Então, o que Deus faz quando tem algo a revelar para a Igreja hoje em dia?

-Resposta-

3. Revelação de Deus para A Igreja vem através do profeta.

Eu sei que hoje em dia temos um profeta verdadeiro, e que ele é guiado por Deus. Agora, nas escrituras sobre Barnabé e Saulo nós vimos que eles foram chamados por revelação para receber o sacerdócio. Irmão Nunes, na sua opinião o que é o sacerdócio?

-Resposta-

Falando sobre o sacerdócio Paulo disse: "Ninguém, pois toma esta honra para si mesmo, se não quando chamado por Deus como aconteceu com Aarão. (Heb. 5:4)" Vamos voltar e ver como Aarão foi chamado. Aqui em Êxodo 28:1 Deus está falando com seu profeta Moisés. Lê Êxodo 28:1. De acordo com esta escritura como foi chamado Aarão?

-Resposta-

E ainda hoje, Irmão Nunes, por que todo homem tem que ser chamado para receber o sacerdócio?

-Resposta-

4. O homem tem que ser chamado por Deus através de revelação para receber o sacerdócio.

(Se estiver presente alguém que poderá receber o sacerdócio, use a seguinte conclusão.)

Como o senhor já sabe, os homens dignos na Igreja depois de 12 anos de idade são chamados para receber o sacerdócio. E por qual princípio são eles chamados?

-Resposta-

Se um homem for chamado por inspiração para receber o sacerdócio ele deve aceitar este chamado?

-Resposta-

Irmão Nunes, se o senhor for chamado por um servo do Senhor para receber o sacerdócio, aceitará esta responsabilidade e esta bênção?

5. Se for chamado eu aceitarei o sacerdócio.

Antigamente foi revelado quem poderia receber o sacerdócio. Nós já lemos sobre Barnabé, Saulo, e Aarão. Também foi revelado quem não podia receber o sacerdócio. O senhor gostaria de ler aqui no livro de Abraão 1:26-27. O que diz o versículo 27 sobre Faraó e o sacerdócio.

-Resposta-

Isto mesmo, Irmão Nunes. O Faraó era de uma descendência que não podia receber o sacerdócio. Vamos examinar esta linhagem para saber sua origem. O senhor conhece a história de Abel e Caim?

-Resposta-

Vamos ler a história na Bíblia. Lê Genesis 4:8-15. Caim e seus descendentes receberam uma marca que os distinguia dos demais povos. Este povo, os descendentes de Caim, por razões não plenamente conhecidas do homem, não tinha direito ao sacerdócio. Por exemplo, foi revelado a Abraão que Faraó, sendo dessa chamada linhagem de Caim, não podia receber o sacerdócio. Irmão Nunes, nós temos visto como Aarão, Barnabé, Saulo, e outros receberam o sacerdócio porque foram chamados por Deus por revelação. Da mesma forma, por que os profetas não concederam o sacerdócio a linhagem de Caim?

-Resposta-

Para saber qual a marca posta sobre Caim e para saber como os profetas distinguiam esta linhagem, vamos ler Moisés 7:22. Lê Moisés 7:22. Como esta linhagem era distinguida das outras?

-Resposta-

E concernente o sacerdócio, porque este grupo ou esta linhagem era diferente?

-Resposta-

6. Deus revelou antigamente que a linhagem de Caim não podia receber o sacerdócio.

Para saber o que Deus revelou sobre este povo hoje em dia, nós precisamos ir aos profetas modernos. O senhor quer ler a parte sublinhada deste folheto?

Lê a seguinte parte da carta da Primeira Presidência publicada em "O Boletim de Sacerdócio." Vol. 6, No. 1 - fevereiro 1970.

"Desde o início desta dispensação, Joseph Smith e todos os sucessivos presidentes da Igreja tem ensinado que os negros, enquanto filhos espirituais de um Pai comum, e descendentes de nossos pais terrestres Adão e Eva, ainda não receberam o Sacerdócio, por razões que nós cremos serem conhecidas por Deus, mas as quais Ele não tem feito plenamente conhecidas do homem."

O que diz aí sobre os negros e o sacerdócio?

-Resposta-

Isto mesmo. Os negros que honestamente procuram a verdade e desejam filiar-se à Igreja podem ser batizados. Mas por que a Igreja não confere o Sacerdócio a eles?

Resposta-

7. Deus revelou que os negros ainda não podem receber o sacerdócio.

Por esta razão o evangelho não é ativamente pregado à linhagem de Caím. O profeta tem nos dito para pregarmos o evangelho para aqueles que tem direito ao sacerdócio. Mas vamos ler o que Deus disse sobre os negros no futuro.

Lê o seguinte parágrafo da carta da Primeira Presidência: "O Presidente McKay também disse que "Um dia qualquer no plano eterno de Deus, ao negro será dado o direito de possuir o Sacerdócio."

O que diz o profeta sobre os negros e o sacerdócio?

Resposta-

Eu sei que isto é a verdade. E quando esse tempo chegar, como saberemos?

-Resposta-

8. No futuro quando for revelado por Deus, os negros vão receber o sacerdócio.

O senhor aceita o ensinamento que Deus revela sua vontade concernente a seu sacerdócio aos profetas, Irmao Nunes?

Bem, eu sei que isto é a verdade e que Deus realmente guia e dirige a Igreja através de revelação moderna. Agora, Irmao Nunes, o senhor sabe se algum dos seus antepassados era negro ou descendente de negro?

-Resposta-

Se no futuro o senhor descobrir que um dos seus antepassados era negro o senhor avisará ao Presidente do Ramo?

-Resposta-

O senhor acha que neste caso permaneceria firme e fiel à Igreja e a seus convenios com Deus?

Resposta-

TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH

[Translated by Noel J. Hudson and the author.]

LINEAGE LESSON Brazil North Mission December, 1970

After confirming previous commitments with the investigator, proceed to the following dialog.

We have explained some of the wonderful teachings of the gospel and the Church of Jesus Christ. A very important principle of the Church of Jesus Christ is that it is always guided by revelation. Let's read what Christ said about revelation in his Church. Read Matt. 16: 15-17. According to verse 17, how did Peter know that Christ was the Son of God?

-Answer-

Yes, Peter received revelation from God. Until then men said that Christ was John the Baptist, or Jeremiah or another prophet. But what did Peter receive which made him certain while the others were wrong?

-Answer-

Perfect. Revelation is so important that Christ Himself said that His Church would be built on the principle of revelation. Would you please read verse 18? Do you think Christ would build His Eternal Church on a mortal man?

-Answer-

A church founded or dependent on Peter or any other man would be the church of any other man. But whose was the church that Christ organized?

-Answer-

In this verse Christ must be talking about some eternal thing on which he would build his Church. And this is the same eternal principle mentioned in verse 17. What principle is this?

-Answer-

1. The Church of Jesus Christ is built upon the rock of revelation.

Exactly. Christ told his apostles that He would build His Church on the rock of revelation. In your opinion, Brother Nunes, what does revelation mean?

-Answer-

We can say, then, that revelation is communication between God and his servants here on earth.

And why is revelation so important?

-Answer-

We read in Acts one example of revelation in the church anciently. Read Acts 13: 2-3. How were Barnabas and Saul called to the ministry?

-Answer-

Let's see another example of revelation in the early Church. In the early days of the Church the gospel was preached to Jews only. But Peter had a dream in which he was sent to go and preach to a family of gentiles. This caused some conflict in the church, but when Peter explained that he had been sent by God to preach to the Gentiles, the Church accepted this new teaching. Why did they accept this teaching?

-Answer-

Then upon what principle it was the early church based?

-Answer-

And why does it have to be that way today?

-Answer-

2. All that the Church does and teaches is by revelation.

When the Church was restored who was called by God to receive revelation for the Church?

-Answer-

But after the Prophet Joseph Smith was martyred was the Church without divine guidance?

-Answer-

So what did God do?

-Answer-

Since the time of Joseph Smith have always been prophets on the earth. As God says in Amos 3: 7. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, save He reveals his secret unto his servants the prophets." So what does God do when he has something to reveal to the Church today?

-Answer-

3. Revelation of God to the Church comes through the prophet.

I know that today we have a real prophet, and he is guided by God. Now, in the scripture about Barnabas and Saul we saw that they were called by revelation to receive the priesthood. Brother Nunes, in your opinion what is the priesthood?

-Answer-

Speaking of the priesthood Paul said: "Let no man therefore take this honor to himself, save he shall be called by God as was Aaron. (Heb. 5: 4) "Let's go back and see how Aaron was called. Here in Exodus 28: 1. According to this scripture how was Aaron called?

-Answer-

And even today, Brother Nunes, why does every man have to be called to receive the priesthood?

-Answer-

4. The man has to be called by God through revelation to receive the priesthood.
(If this is someone who can hold the priesthood, use the following conclusion.)

As you already know, worthy men in the Church 12 years of age or older are called to receive the priesthood. And by what principle are they called?

-Answer-

If a man is called by inspiration to receive the priesthood, should he accept this call?

-Answer-

Brother Nunes, if you are called by a servant of the Lord to receive the priesthood, will you accept this responsibility and this blessing?

5. If called I will accept the priesthood.

Previously it was revealed who could receive the priesthood. We've read about Barnabas, Saul, and Aaron. It was also revealed who could not receive the priesthood. Would you like to read here in the book of Abraham 1: 26-27. What does verse 27 say about Pharaoh and the priesthood.

-Answer-

That's right, Brother Nunes. The Pharaoh descended from a line that could not hold the priesthood. Let's examine this lineage to know its origin. You know the story of Cain and Abel?

-Answer-

Let's read the story in the Bible. Read Genesis 4: 8-15. Cain and his descendants received a mark

that distinguished them from other people. These people, the descendants of Cain, for reasons not fully known to man, were not entitled to the priesthood. For example, it was revealed to Abraham that Pharaoh, being of the lineage of Cain, could not hold the priesthood. Brother Nunes, we have seen how Aaron, Barnabas, Saul, and others received the priesthood because they had been called by God through revelation. Similarly, why didn't the prophets grant the priesthood to the line of Cain?

-Answer-

To find out what the mark was that was put on Cain and to learn how the prophets distinguished this line, we read Moses 7:22. Read Moses 7:22. How was this line distinguished from others?

-Answer-

And with respect to the priesthood, why was this group or lineage different?

-Answer-

6. God revealed anciently that the line of Cain could not hold the priesthood.

To know what God has revealed about this people today, we need to go to modern prophets. Would you please read the underlined part of this brochure?

Read the following part of the First Presidency letter published in "The Priesthood Bulletin" Vol 6, no. 1 - February 1970.

"Since the beginning of this dispensation, Joseph Smith and all the successive presidents of the Church have taught that blacks, while spirit children of a common Father, and descendants of our earthly parents Adam and Eve, have not yet received the priesthood, for reasons we believe are known to man."

What does it say there about blacks and the priesthood?

-Answer-

That's right. Blacks who honestly seek the truth and want to join the Church may be baptized. But why doesn't the Church confer the priesthood on them?

-Answer-

7. God revealed that blacks can not yet hold the priesthood.

For this reason the gospel is not actively preached to the lineage of Cain. The prophet has told us to preach the gospel to those who are entitled to the priesthood. But let's read what God said about black people in the future. Read the following paragraph in the letter from the First Presidency, "President McKay also said that" One day in God's eternal plan, the Negro will be given the right to hold the priesthood. "

What does the prophet say about blacks and the priesthood?

-Answer-

I know this is the truth. And when that time comes, how will we know?

-Answer-

8. In the future when it is revealed by God, blacks will receive the priesthood.

Do you accept the teaching that God reveals his will concerning his priesthood to the prophets, Brother Nunes?

Well, I know this is the truth and that God really guides and directs the Church through modern revelation. Now, Brother Nunes, do you know if any of your ancestors was black or descended from blacks?

-Answer-

If in the future if you discover that one of your ancestors was black will you tell the President of the Branch?

-Answer-

Do you think that in this case you would remain firm and faithful to your covenants with God?

-Answer-

APPENDIX B: Church Membership in Rio de Janeiro, 1940-1974

	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974				
Bonsucesso Branch																							82	126															
Cascadura Branch																																							
Ipanema Branch																0	22	52	88	68	108	177																	
Jardim Botânico Branch																							216	309	308	308	408	411	416	368	385	382							
Meier Branch																						47	111	153	192	267	292	BL	491	541	645	307	324						
Rio de Janeiro/ Tijuca Branch	BL		2	14	12	4	14	15	23	24	28	40	44	48	55	64	35	59	70	90	114	130	261	263	388	420	857	446	454	345	468	483							
Ilha do Governador Branch																																							
Iraja Branch																																							
Rio 1st Ward																																							
Rio 2nd Ward																																							
Rio 4th Ward (Rio 3rd was in Niteroi)																																							
Rio 5th Ward																																							
Rio 6th Ward																																							
Rio City Total	0	0	2	14	12	4	14	15	23	24	28	40	44	48	55	64	57	111	128	158	269	418	712	890	963	1020	1285	1348	1411	1358	1896	1819	3029	3486	3681				
Niteroi													4	9	BL	4	8	26	42	46	60	57	114	135	158	189	200	223	289	339	399	476	410	447	454				
Total (Rio & Niteroi)	0	0	2	14	12	4	14	15	23	24	28	40	48	57	68	65	137	170	204	329	475	826	1025	1121	1189	1485	1571	1700	1697	2095	2295	3439	3833	4135					
Rio Area Percent Change				600.0	-14.3	-66.7	250.0	7.1	53.3	4.3	16.7	42.9	20.0	18.8	-3.5	23.6	-4.4	110.8	24.1	20.0	61.3	44.4	73.9	24.1	9.4	6.1	25.7	5.1	8.2	-0.2	23.5	9.5	49.8	14.4	5.1				

BL: The Manuscript History listed the branch or ward, but without a membership figure.

[Statistics are taken from Gordon Irving, "Preliminary Compilation of the Numerical Strength of the LDS Church in Brazil, 1935-74," Historical Department of the Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, digitized copy in the possession of Mark Grover.]

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