

Helpings Hands Program Opens Way for Missionary Work, New Stake in Amapá, Brazil

By Michelle Sá, with contributions from Elder Fabiano Cavaleiro

On Saturday, March 10, 2012, 21 people entered the waters of baptism. This is the largest number of people in recent years in the Brazilian states of Para and Amapá, both part of the Brazil Belém Mission, to receive the ordinance of baptism on the same day and to become “fellowcitizens” with the Saints (Ephesians 2:19) and walk “in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).

The baptisms came shortly after the announcement that the Macapá district was to become a stake, which happened on April 14 and 15.

Leaders, members, and missionaries have joined forces in working toward this kind of growth. The work of the Helping Hands program has also been instrumental in recent missionary work.

“The Helping Hands projects held over the past two years in the state of Amapá have brought the Church out of obscurity, awakening in government officials, the press, and society in general the desire to become familiar with this marvelous program and the church that promotes it,” said José Claudio Furtado Campos, recently released president of the Brazil Belém Mission.

In fact, the projects have helped so much in the state that government officials have introduced three new holidays in the region: April 6, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Day; July 30, Helping Hands Solidarity Action Day; and September 23, “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” Day. Additionally, a vote of thanks to the Church was presented to Elder Jairo Mazzagardi of the Seventy, Second Counselor in the Brazil Area Presidency.

“The Helping Hands projects have helped the Church earn much more credibility among the people of Amapá,” President Campos continued. “When our missionaries introduce themselves . . . , the people tell them that they have already heard about the Church because they have seen material on television, on the radio, and in the newspaper. They have heard great things about the Church, and this often increases receptivity to missionary work.”

Michelle Sá is the assistant director of public affairs, Macapá Brazil Stake; Elder Fabiano Cavaleiro is a full-time missionary serving in the Brazil Belém Mission. ■

In Macapá, Brazil, 21 people entered the waters of baptism on Saturday, March 10, 2012, approximately one month before the Macapá Brazil District became a stake. Those new members are pictured here with missionaries from the Brazil Belém Mission. The signs say, “Estaca Macapá,” or “Macapá stake.” Local leadership and membership attribute much of the growth and strength of the Church in the area to the Helping Hands program.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHELLE SÁ