MARANATHA AND THE CHURCH IN BRAZIL

Brazil is such a large country that many different colporteurs and missionaries began sharing the Adventist message in different places at different times to reach all the people groups spread throughout. In the beginning none of the missionaries spoke Portuguese or had any materials in the local language, so they only reached German immigrants in Brazil. With time the church developed resources in Portuguese and now the Adventist Church is flourishing there. One out of every 156 people in Brazil today are Adventist. The Seventh-day Adventist run television and radio stations “Novo Tempo” are a household name and a favorite of many.

Maranatha began working in Brazil in 2011 when Adventist Church leadership communicated a need for church buildings. Since 2011, Maranatha has completed 167 churches. In 2013, Maranatha planned to build 313 One-Day Churches, and many of these have already been completed. Up to this point, Maranatha has primarily focused on church buildings; however, in 2014 Maranatha will begin construction on an Education and Evangelism Center in northern Brazil. This large structure will provide learning space for hundreds of students to learn about God.

Since 2011, Maranatha’s local workers have completed all construction projects in Brazil. An Open Team project in January, 2014 marks the first Maranatha volunteer trip to Brazil since the ’70s.

If you can, look up the strange story of how the Adventist message first reached Brazil via a stowaway from Germany. When he met a pair of Adventist missionaries on the journey, they offered to send literature to his stepfather's address in Brazil. The story gets even better from there! Read about it in the Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia.

Project Scope

Maranatha projects are currently being built in three main areas - Bahia (East Brazil Union), Belem (North Brazil Union) and the Northeast Brazil Union.

Most of the churches being built in the Northeast Brazil Union are “Evangelism Churches.” These are churches constructed before a congregation has formed, and they will be used for evangelism to form a group. The church leaders would like to build 100 churches each year for the next four years.

The East Brazil Union has requested 1,000 new churches in Salvador. Many of the requests from Salvador are for congregations that are already thriving.

Project Funding

The local church is responsible for providing the land and the labor to excavate the site. Maranatha has agreed to raise a specified amount for the school and churches they provide in Brazil.

Many church and school groups sending volunteer teams choose to sponsor the cost of construction. If your team is interested in sponsoring a project, please talk to Maranatha.
ABOUT BRAZIL
From the wildlife-rich Amazon basin to the bustling city of Sao Paulo, Brazil is a land of diversity. The culture of its people burst from the drums of the Samba and the colorful costumes that adorn the Carnaval dancers. However, it also has a dark history including slavery, and human and environmental exploitation.

Three primary indigenous tribes originally inhabited Brazil. However, when the Portuguese settlers sailed to its shores in 1531, the simple life of the nomadic Indians changed. The sailors had come looking for spices, ivory, and diamonds, and they brought with them diseases, war, and slavery as they forced the Indians to work alongside African slaves on sugar plantations. The Portuguese settlers also brought something else with them: Catholicism. Jesuit missions sprang up in small villages as the priests tried to convert the local Indians, many times through force. This effort ended with a mixture of Catholicism, animism, and African cults, as well as many lives lost on both sides.

In the early 1800’s, as Portugal was under invasion from Napoleon, Dom Joao VI, Portuguese prince and regent, fled with his family for the Brazilian colonies. This New World colony became the first and only colony to have a European monarch ruling on its soil. When Dom Joao returned to Europe, his son Dom Pedro I took over rule and declared independence from Portugal, naming himself Emperor of Brazil. Government leadership passed to powerful, feuding landowners and eventually to dictators until 1989 when Brazil held its first democratic election.

Throughout Brazil’s history it has always remained an economic asset and a leading exporter of sugar, coffee beans, and rubber. Unfortunately, the heavy demand for rubber during the late 1800’s caused expansive deforestation in the Amazon basin. While the Amazonia region is still home to more than 300 species of mammals and 2,000 species of fish, hundreds of Brazil’s animal species are endangered and major ecosystems are threatened due to the destruction of natural environments.

Attractions
Brazil is an immense country and traveling from city to city could take hours, or days. If you are planning on visiting one of the big cities, here are some top attractions.

- **Christ the Redeemer Statue** | This may be the most iconic monument in Brazil. If your group is planning to travel to Rio de Janiero, don’t miss it. While are there you can also get a fantastic aerial view of the area via cable car on Sugarloaf Mountain near Guanabara Bay.
- **Iguacu Falls National Park** | (near Sao Paulo) This World Heritage Site is at the border of three countries. Argentina and Paraguay are just a few miles away. The spectacular falls are a memorable site.

Many volunteer groups will be working in the state of Para, near the city of Belem. Here are some local attractions in that area.

- **Cranes’ Mangrove** | This 40,000 square meter park has an aviary, butterfly enclosure and lakes. It allows visitors to experience some native Amazon environment close to the city. Limited hours.
- **Rodriguez Alves Woodland/Botanical Garden** | This is one of the oldest botanical gardens in Brazil and has a big variety of flora amongst lakes, waterfalls, caves, and even a small zoo.

Culture
Brazil is an incredibly large and diverse country. Brazil’s indigenous roots mixed with European culture and African influences, leaving a unique mark on Brazilian lifestyle. The deep chasm between rich and poor has become even more prominent, and the proximity between the two has grown closer and closer. In the cities the rich live comfortably in colonial style apartments while the poor live in favelas, makeshift slum communities.
lorded over by gangs and drug runners. However, no matter the social status, all Brazilians share two common loves: football (soccer) and music. One visit Rio de Janeiro will quickly show their enthusiasm for their teams and enjoyment of music and dance of the tribal drums.

Brazil remains a land of diversity and contrasts. The colonial baroque buildings of Salvador are contrasted against the modernity of Brasília, and the unexplored Amazon tributaries are a sharp difference from the populous coast. These contrasts define Brazilian culture and will always remain a part its people.

Weather
Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world, so it is best to research the specific location you will be visiting to find out their weather patterns. Most of Brazil is warm-hot most of the time. Near the Amazon it is very humid with lots of rain. In parts of North Brazil, December-March is considered winter because of extensive rain. That is opposite from the rest of the country who enjoys cooler months June-August.

PLANNING A PROJECT
There are many reasons to plan a project with Maranatha. After 40+ years of laser-focus on construction-oriented mission projects, the organization has this process mastered.

Maranatha has a great track record. From local church members to church officials to volunteer team leaders—everyone recognizes that Maranatha is reliable and gets things done. We know that the details are important. Maranatha will always have your worksite prepared and support you in creating a successful project for your team.

Maranatha provides local support. It is a huge help to have someone at your location, before your arrival, to scout out details and make arrangements for your group. Once your group arrives our volunteer support person Elmer Barbosa will be around to help as a translator and navigate the inevitable bumps in the road.

Maranatha provides quality construction support. You don’t have to be a construction expert to build a project with Maranatha. Our qualified crew will prep the project site before you arrive, and they will stay to teach and assist the volunteers throughout the project. You won’t just build a church or school—you will do it right!

Maranatha office support is available as you plan. Kim Haas is the group project specialist at Maranatha. She is available for questions and resources as you plan your project and work with group members.

Maranatha is an independent organization but we work hand-in-hand with church leadership around the world. Every Maranatha project in Brazil has been selected by the local Adventist conference and approved by the division as a priority for growth. That means that your project will have the full support of the larger church.

Volunteer Opportunities
Volunteers typically combine construction work with outreach, such as medical clinics and children’s programs. However, the details of each project vary, depending on the volunteers, availability of opportunities, and needs of the church in Brazil. Maranatha will work with a team leader to create a trip that takes advantage of the group’s strengths.

In Brazil, Maranatha projects will focus on One-Day Church construction. Maranatha provides a sturdy frame and roof. The local churches are finishing the walls themselves. Some of the conferences have a specific plan to finish the churches, and others leave it up to each congregation to decide. A few of the congregations will

FACTS & FIGURES

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<tr>
<th>Capital: Brasilia</th>
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<tr>
<td>Population: 201,009,622</td>
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<td>Languages: Portuguese</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climate: Tropical. March is the warmest month, with highs in the mid 80’s and lows in the mid 70’s, while July is the coolest, with temperatures in the 70’s.</td>
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<td>Religion: 74% Roman Catholic, 15% Protestant</td>
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<td>Currency: Brazilian Real (approximately 2 Reales to $1 USD)</td>
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provide funds for volunteers to finish the walls of their church.

Maranatha is also building a block-constructed school, called an Education and Evangelism Centers in Castanhal, near the city of Belem, in the state of Para. The large building has eight classrooms and a big central auditorium. Many groups will be able to work on this campus. Call or email Kim Haas to find out what projects are available now.

Travel
Frequent direct flights connect Brazil with major airports worldwide. Depending on where your group will be volunteering, you will probably fly into either the Belem, Val-de-Cans International Airport (BEL), or the Deputado Luiz Eduardo Magalhaes International Airport (SSA) in Salvador.

Travel Requirements For Entry and Exit
All passports must be valid for at least six months from the dates of your intended return. If you do not have a passport, you can apply at any U.S. post office or online at http://travel.state.gov. It can take up to two months to complete the entire process, so plan accordingly to give yourself enough time to receive your passport.

In addition to a passport, travelers must also have a valid tourist visa for the country of Brazil before traveling. A Yellow Fever vaccination is not required unless the applicant has traveled to an endemic area in the last 90 days or will be applying through the consulate in Washington, D.C.

Ideally, you should have your visa three to six weeks prior to your departure date. The Brazilian government requires that you apply with the consulate or embassy in your regional jurisdiction. You can either apply in person or use an online visa service. Typical processing for the visa can take anywhere from a week to over a month. So we recommend that you apply for your visa no less than six weeks, and no more than three months before the project.

A packet of information with complete visa requirements, a letter of invitation (required), and tips for filling everything out will be provided by Maranatha. It will also include the visa application form for your review. However, we recommend that you submit that online.

Citizens from countries other than the United States and Canada must consult the Brazilian embassy or consulate in your home country for entrance requirements.

If you do not have a passport, get started on the application process right away. U.S. citizens can go online to start the process at www.travel.state.gov/passport. You can expedite the process for an additional fee.

Minors traveling without two parents must travel with a notarized consent form. Click here for the link and instructions.

Accommodations
Your options for accommodations will depend on the project location. During your site visit, our field support staff will help you identify options for your group.

Groups may choose to stay in a hotel. There are many variations and price levels, throughout Brazil.

Some areas also have camp-style facilities with bunkrooms or cabins and a group kitchen and dining area. These campuses can be rustic but affordable.

Another style of housing is the “pousada.” Pousadas are luxury accommodations (similar to a bed and breakfast) in restored historical buildings. The comfort level and price point vary from $40-$140 per room.

There are several small hotels near the EEC in Castanhal that cost approximately $40-$100 per room.

Transportation in Brazil
There are many national and international airports throughout Brazil. Once you arrive, Maranatha’s volunteer support team will help you to arrange a bus to transport volunteers from place to place.

**Excursion Options**
Your excursions in Brazil could include a waterfall hike, taking pictures with an Anaconda, visiting the Cristo statue in Rio, shopping at a local artisan market, an amazon cruise, or even a zip line tour through the tops of the tropical tree forest canopy.

For more details about excursion options, search the Internet or buy a guidebook like Lonely Planet Brazil. Many of these books are now available to download onto your computer or other device.

**Money**
Local currency is the Brazilian Real. In October 2013, one Real is worth $0.45.

**Credit/Debit Cards |** Credit cards are accepted at most restaurants, upscale hotels, and travel agencies. However, they can be problematic, and it may be better to carry cash as a backup. ATMs are available in most places throughout Brazil.

**Traveler's Checks |** Traveler checks are not widely accepted, and commissions can be high.

**General Health**

**Food Safety |** Since food safety standards vary greatly from country to country, and water is not always safe to drink in some areas, we recommend that you exercise caution with the food and water you consume while traveling abroad. Volunteers or hired help who cook for the group should be trained in the details of cooking safety in a foreign environment.

If group members choose to buy food during the project, commercially packaged snacks are the safest. Food from street side stands can cause illness. Drink and cook with only purified water or sealed processed drinks.

Avoid uncooked, pre-cut fruit and vegetables. Stick to fruits and vegetables that you can peel or wash in purified water yourself. Oranges, bananas, avocados and mangoes are all good. Remember to wipe the fruit down before peeling it so you don’t end up with all the bad stuff on your hands.

**Water |** Never drink unpurified water. Do not even brush your teeth with unpurified water. Bottled water is cheap and easy to find, and canned and bottled drinks are a safe alternative. Fortunately many eateries and restaurants use purified water in their drinks and ice. Be sure to ask if the ice was made with purified water or avoid ice in your drink altogether.

**Insects |** Mosquitos and other flying insects are not only a nuisance but also carry diseases. Personal precautions are the easiest way to lower the risk of being bitten. Volunteers are encouraged to bring a bug repellent with a 25%-50% concentration of DEET. Wear long sleeves, long pants, and closed-toe footwear.

**Medical |** Maranatha requires that every volunteer have a current tetanus vaccine (within the last 10 years). The Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends other standard vaccines, as well as an anti-malarial medication. You should schedule a consultation with a travel clinic doctor to talk about the medical risks in, Brazil, and how to minimize them.


We recommend that groups have a team medic and/or a safety officer to help monitor your group. During your site visit, Elmer Barbosa, volunteer support staff, will help you locate medical facilities in case they are needed during your project.

**Miscellaneous**

**Time |** Brazil has three different time zones. For those working in the Belem area, local time is GMT -3 hours.

**Phones |** When calling the U.S. from Brazil, dial 00+1+ city area code+local number.
When calling Brazil from the U.S. dial 011+55+local number.

**Restrooms** | Public restrooms are few and far between in Brazil, so you should take breaks at your hotel or restaurants or modern shopping centers. Some areas have Western-style flush toilets while others have squat toilets. But toilet paper usually goes in the wastebasket, not down the toilet.

**Electricity** | The voltage in Brazil is 110v and 220v. Most outlets are two or three pronged and accept either plug. However you may need to use an adapter because of the difference in voltage.

**Laundry** | Most cities and large towns have full service Laundromats. Many hotels also provide laundry service but often charge per item or by weight, which adds up pretty fast.

**Weights & Measures** | The metric system is used in Brazil.

### SAFETY AND SECURITY

Maranatha takes safety seriously, and we do everything possible to minimize risk wherever we are working. However, accidents and crimes do happen, even close to home. We constantly monitor safety reports for the areas we are working in and avoid high-risk areas.

When traveling in Brazil, advise your group to stay together, not wander off alone, and avoid displaying expensive objects or large amounts of cash. The areas we serve are often low-income areas, and a volunteer’s big camera, laptop, smartphone, jewelry or expensive shoes may be a temptation. The majority of volunteers never experience any problems but being conscious with your belongings will lower that risk even more.

Your Maranatha volunteer support person Elmer Barbosa will work with the local community to garner information on safe places to stay and to find trustworthy people to help serve the group (drivers, etc.).

For a broader look at security in Brazil you may want to look up the information at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). You can also view security updates about Brazil and many other country specific resources through our Travel Assist service available to all Maranatha volunteer leaders. Visit [www.chartisinsurance.com/travelguardassistance](http://www.chartisinsurance.com/travelguardassistance) to sign up for alerts or access a report. The Travel assist website allows you to sign up for email alerts when significant safety or security events arise in the countries of your choice. You can also look up a country report or even the specifics of a major city you’ll be visiting. The report lists location-specific details about public transport, crime, health concerns, emergency phone numbers, maps, and more. There are other helpful features, such as medical terminology translation, tips for dealing with conflict, and safety tips for female travelers.

### COMMUNICATION

**Sharing Maranatha**

You may contact Maranatha’s marketing department for materials to help you promote your trip. There are DVDs and printed materials available for your convenience. Contact Maranatha for more details.

**Phone Calls**

U.S. cell phones may work in some urban areas of the country. Coverage in other areas may be limited or non-existent. Check with your provider regarding coverage. There are also free or low-cost methods of communication through Internet, including Skype, and local internet café phone booths.

**Contact Information**

For more information about leading a group project to Brazil contact:

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