

to strengthen the church's future, they raised funds to support a ministry couple and began searching for the right leaders.

After years of prayerful searching, Alcides and Leslie Morais were interviewed by the council and invited to serve the church. They accepted two clear objectives: to raise elders and to develop young leadership.

With funding available for only three years, they knew time was limited.

As they served, it became increasingly evident that Marco Ribeiro and Paulo Fonseca met the biblical qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy and Titus. Long before receiving the title, both men had quietly demonstrated the heart of shepherds through years of faithful service. The intentional work of preparing them for the eldership began.

Both Marco and Paulo, together with their wives, Ana Maria and Juliana, first had to confront painful experiences from the past. Their journey toward spiritual healing was neither quick nor easy, but their deep love for God and his church ultimately proved stronger than the hurts they carried.

Over the following years, God worked not only in the lives of these couples but throughout the congregation.

As healing spread, a new leadership team emerged, bringing together the elders-in-training and two younger evangelistic leaders, supported by their wives.

The younger leaders focused on strengthening the church's social media presence and connecting with young professionals while the future elders learned to broaden their shepherding beyond individual house churches to care for the entire congregation. As moments of fear, hesitation, and uncertainty arose, they continually returned to God's Word, allowing him to reshape their vision, faith, and determination.

The June 14 service reflected both gratitude for the past and anticipation for the future.

Special thanks to the elders in Tallahassee, Tampa, Broward, and Miami (Florida), as well as elders in Boston, Chicago, Hong Kong, Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, and São Paulo, whose guidance, friendship, and willingness to serve played an invaluable role in raising elders for the Rio church.

**Carioca is the official demonym for anyone born in or native to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.*

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July 9, 2026 • Justin Renton – Johannesburg, South Africa

On June 6, 1944, Allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy. In the brutal hours that followed, the course of World War II shifted permanently. The enemy's capacity to win had been broken. And yet, the fighting raged on for 11 more months. Soldiers still died; cities still burned. Berlin had not yet fallen. But every...

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My daughter Avery fell in love with lacrosse when she was 12, and there was no looking back. The next year she fell in love with Jesus, and again, there was no looking back. She went all in for him. Ever since, we've been on a journey: What does it mean for...



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INTERNATIONAL & LOCAL NEWS BULLETIN

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Rio Church Appoints First Elders

UPCOMING EVENTS

US ICMC

July 30-August 2, 2026
Milwaukee, WI, USA

North American Singles Conference

September 3-6, 2026
Baltimore, MD, USA

**DT Travel 2026 Mediterranean Cruise:
Footsteps of Paul**
September 12-22, 2026

North American Teachers Conference

September 17-19, 2026
Raleigh, NC, USA

Spacon

October 2-4, 2026
Brisbane, Australia

Minister's Wellness Webinar

October 15, 2026
Online

Conferencia de Las Americas

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Oct 15-18, 2026

July 12, 2026 • Alcides and Leslie de Morais – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

On June 14, 2026, the church in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil celebrated a historic milestone as Marco Ribeiro and Paulo Fonseca were appointed as its first elders. The emotion-filled service marked the beginning of a new chapter for the congregation, bringing to fruition years of prayer, sacrifice, training, and perseverance.

Tears of joy, relief, and expectation filled the room as three elders from São Paulo joined their sister church in celebrating this long-awaited occasion. During the welcome, Anderson Rodrigues, who, together with his wife Viviane, has faithfully served the Carioca* disciples for decades, reflected on the church's many seasons before declaring this new chapter: the era of the elders.

Rio de Janeiro is one of the world's best-known cities, celebrated for its vibrant culture, breathtaking beaches, and warm, welcoming people. Brazil's second-largest city became home to an International Church of Christ in 1991, when a team of 36 disciples, mostly from São Paulo, along with a few Americans, planted the church.

The congregation flourished during its first decade, growing steadily in both numbers and spiritual maturity. Like many churches, however, it also faced seasons of challenge that left lasting marks. Through it all, the Carioca Christians remained resilient and faithful.

For nearly a decade, the church had no full-time ministry couple. Instead, a council of brothers faithfully shepherded the congregation while balancing full-time jobs and family responsibilities. Determined



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