Elder Mathias Held and his wife, Irene, could aptly be called personifications of a global Church. Both are Colombians of German ancestry. Jobs and schooling have taken them from their South American homeland to Canada, Germany, Guatemala, Brazil, and, finally, back to Colombia. In each country, they’ve adjusted to new languages and cultures.

“That spiritual “sameness” anchored the couple while they raised three children and grew in the gospel.

The Helds were childhood classmates at a German-language school in their hometown of Bogotá, Colombia. They were sealed on June 13, 1989, in the Frankfurt Germany Temple, after Mathias earned a mechanical engineering degree in Bogotá and a master's degree in business administration in Canada.

Work opportunities later took the young couple to Hanover, Germany, where Sister Held received a powerful impression that their lives were about to change.

“I told Mathias I had a feeling that we would get a message from heaven,” she said. That heavenly message arrived on a rainy afternoon in 1987 with a knock at the front door. Standing outside were Mormon missionaries speaking German with American accents.

For the next 10 months, the Helds studied with the missionaries and made friends in the local LDS congregation. After much prayer, they received spiritual confirmation of the gospel’s truthfulness and were baptized in 1988.

Elder Held worked for more than 25 years for the auto manufacturer Daimler-Benz, with his management duties taking him around the world. The Helds have relied upon the Lord at each stop.

“It does not matter what trials you are going through,” he said. “If you are communicating with heaven, you will be all right.”

Born on June 5, 1960, to Michael and Elisabeth Held, Elder Held has served as a counselor in a stake presidency, a counselor in a bishopric, and an Area Seventy in the South America Northwest Area.