



One New Temple, THREE NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The lives of these three families were changed by visiting the Quetzaltenango Guatemala Temple open house.

By Don L. Searle

Senior missionary, Central America Area, 2012–14

The Beginning of a New Life

In the summer of 2011, the Wundram family was ready to move from Guatemala to the United States so that Carlos Wundram, a doctor, could pursue advanced studies.

“When we were ready to go,” he recalls, “something stopped me.” His wife, Adriana, experienced the same feelings, so together they prayed and received a confirmation in their hearts that they should not go.

They canceled their plans—and were left wondering what God had in mind for them. Four months later they would find out.

Carlos had been a member of the Church since he was 14 but had dropped out of activity around the time he began his university studies at age 21.

Adriana, although not a member herself, had long wanted to marry a Latter-day Saint. A good friend of hers, a Church member, had married a returned missionary who was tender, loving, and attentive. Adriana wanted a husband like that.

When they first started going out, Adriana and Carlos did not talk of his religion, but he demonstrated many of the qualities of her friend’s husband. He did not act superior to her. After they got married and had children, she appreciated that he bathed the babies and changed diapers!

As their three children began to grow up, “we began to think that we should get closer to God,” Carlos says. They did not find what they were looking for in the Christian church they attended for a time, but the feelings that they needed to get nearer to God persisted.

After canceling their plans to move to the United States, the Wundrams decided to make some improvements to their home, including buying new windows. They immediately liked the man who came to do the installation, José Mena. One day a discussion with him touched on religion. He said he was a member of The Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Carlos replied that he was also but had not attended for some time.

The next time Brother Mena came to work on the windows, he brought a Book of Mormon and a copy of the *Liahona* for each family member. Reading the magazine, Carlos began to experience familiar spiritual feelings. Then Brother Mena invited them to attend the Quetzaltenango Guatemala Temple open house.

When they entered the temple, the Wundram children began to ask, “Dad, what can we do to be members of this Church?” As they left, their youngest son, Rodrigo, age 10, lingered behind and, with the help of his mother, filled out a card requesting a visit from the missionaries.

The family met with the missionaries. “I did not want to pressure my family to be baptized,” Carlos says. “But they really felt the Spirit for themselves.”

Adriana and the children were baptized in December 2011, a few days before the dedication of the Quetzaltenango Temple. “The great blessing that God gave me is that I baptized them,” Carlos says. Just over one year later, the family was sealed in the temple, a joyous occasion for all of them.





The Opportunity to Be Sealed

When Ana Victoria Hernández, who was not a member of the Church, married Belbin Calderón, he was a member but wasn't attending because he worked on Sundays. Belbin says a strong feeling brought him back. He recalls, "I gave up my job because I wanted to go back to church." After he became active again, his wife noticed that he was becoming more humble, and there was more unity in their home.

Belbin hoped his wife might gain an interest in the gospel, but he never tried to push her. One Sunday while dusting the bookcase, Ana Victoria discovered one of Belbin's books about the history of the Church. Curious, she began to read. The stories of the sacrifices of the pioneers touched her deeply.

A few weeks later, the October 2011 *Liahona* came, a special issue about the Book of Mormon. Again out of curiosity, Ana Victoria began to read the Book of Mormon. She soon realized it contained not just a history but also the words of prophets. She began to attend sacrament meeting with her husband and children.

Then she and her family visited the Quetzaltenango Temple open house. Ana Victoria was touched when she learned that her family could be sealed for eternity. "That had a great impact on me. I felt the need to be sealed to them," she recalls. She began taking the missionary lessons and was baptized on December 7, 2011. She attended the temple dedication four days later.

Brother and Sister Calderón were sealed in the temple with their children in December 2012. Ana Victoria says she cannot describe her happiness at "knowing I can be with my family forever." Belbin calls the certainty of their sealing "the greatest blessing I could possibly imagine."

The Temple Touched His Spirit

The construction of a temple in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, fulfilled a dream for Mónica Elena Fuentes Álvarez de Méndez. She is the daughter of a pioneer in the Church who instilled in her a love of the gospel and all its blessings. Her mother, Magda Ester Álvarez, was baptized in 1953, six years after Latter-day Saint missionaries first arrived in Guatemala.

Mónica grew up in the Church and eventually married a good man, Enio Méndez, who was not a member. He supported his wife and daughter in Church activities and admired its members, but he showed no interest in being baptized. Nevertheless, Mónica remembers her mother telling her that one day her husband would become a member. "I never lost faith," she says, even though she had no idea what could bring about his conversion.

Her mother enjoyed the blessings of periodic visits to the temple in Guatemala City and was filled with joy in 2006 when a temple was announced for Quetzaltenango. But Magda Álvarez suffered from a terminal illness and passed away in 2008, before the temple in Quetzaltenango could be built.

Mónica and her young adult daughter, Mónica Esther Méndez Fuentes, served together as guides during the open house for the Quetzaltenango Temple. Enio attended the open house with them, and unbeknownst to them, he went back two more times.

Leaving the temple together on the last day of the open house, Mónica and her daughter wondered if Magda Álvarez's prediction about Enio could ever come true.

Enio had always believed it was acceptable for him to be a member of his church and his wife and daughter to be members of theirs so long as they respected each other's beliefs. But his experiences at the temple open house gave him much to think about. "I began to fast, without saying anything to them, and to pray," he recalls. He went into the mountains, where he likes to go to ponder. "I asked the Lord, 'What should I do, then?'" In fact, he already knew what was right, but he needed to resolve doubts.

Enio was baptized in April 2012—a deeply moving occasion for both his wife and his daughter.

The Méndez family was sealed in the Quetzaltenango Temple in October 2013. Sister Méndez expressed their joy at an eternal goal achieved and their hope to be faithful until the end of their lives. ■



SHINING LIKE A JEWEL

At the cornerstone ceremony before the dedication of the Quetzaltenango Guatemala Temple, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, promised, "This temple will bring eternal families to this place and country."¹ Among "the sons and daughters of Lehi,"² as President Uchtdorf described them, the temple has become a beacon of hope. He also commented on the beauty of the temple, saying, "It has a glowing shine like a jewel, and it is a jewel for this area."³

THE QUETZALTENANGO GUATEMALA TEMPLE

Announced on December 16, 2006, by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)

Dedicated on December 11, 2011, by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

126,000 visitors attended the open house, held in November 2011

136th temple operating worldwide

Second temple in Guatemala (after the Guatemala City Guatemala Temple, dedicated by President Hinckley in 1984)

Size of temple: 21,085 square feet (1,959 m²)

Temple district: 60,000 members in 15 stakes and 7 districts

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, in Jason Swensen, "Quetzaltenango Guatemala Temple: 'This Temple Will Bring Eternal Families to This Place and Country,'" *Church News*, Dec. 11, 2011, ldschurchnews.com.
2. "Quetzaltenango Guatemala Temple: Dedicatory Prayer," ldschurchtemples.com/quetzaltenango.
3. "Dedication Held for Quetzaltenango Guatemala Temple," Church Newsroom, Dec. 11, 2011, mormonnewsroom.org.