



Gather to the TEMPLE

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When Benedito Carlos do Carmo Mendes Martins decided to take his family to the nearest temple in 1992, he needed 15 days off work to make the arduous round-trip from his home in Manaus, in northern Brazil. It was a busy time for his company, however, and his boss refused to give him time off.

Because the family had prepared, sacrificed, and saved money to make the trip, they prayed that they might somehow still be able to go. Their prayers were soon answered.

“The day before the trip, I was diagnosed with parasites,” Brother Martins said. “I was so happy to be sick!”

His doctor immediately prescribed medication and a two-week medical leave of absence from work, which, by law, his company was obligated to give. The next day the family left for the temple.

“I took my medicine with me, and during the trip I received injections,” Brother Martins said. By the time he returned, the parasites were gone.

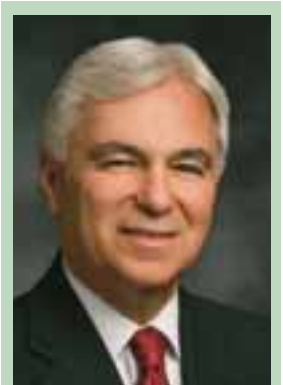
“I came home with faith in and a

testimony of the ordinances of the temple,” he said, “especially the ordinance of being sealed to my wife and three children.”

Before Manaus became part of the Caracas Venezuela Temple District in 2005, the nearest temple was the São Paulo Brazil Temple, located thousands of miles away in southeastern Brazil. Some Latter-day Saints in Manaus were so determined to go to the temple that they sold their homes, means of transportation, work tools—anything of value—to raise money.

To reach São Paulo, members would travel by boat on the Rio Negro to its nearby confluence with the Amazon and from there east to the Rio Madeira—a distance of about 70 miles (115 km). Then they would travel more than 600 miles (965 km) southeast on the Rio Madeira to the city of Pôrto Velho. From there they would board buses and trek another 1,500 miles (2,400 km) to São Paulo. After serving in the house of the Lord, they would make the seven-day return trip.

When Saints from Manaus prepared to make their first trip to the temple in



For many Latter-day Saints throughout the world, attending the temple requires great sacrifice. When Saints from Manaus, Brazil, made their first trip to the temple in Caracas, they were so happy they declared, “Now it takes us only 40 hours to get to the temple!”

Caracas, they were so happy they declared, “Now it takes us only 40 hours to get to the temple!” To get to Caracas, the Saints had to endure a 1,000-mile (1,600-km) bus ride that included traveling through unsettled parts of the Amazon jungle and changing from a larger bus to a smaller bus at Brazil’s border with Venezuela. The distance was shorter, but the trip still required substantial monetary sacrifice, with the added expense of obtaining passports.

As the Saints embarked, they sang, “Rise, Ye Saints, and Temples Enter.”¹ To maintain reverence and stay focused on the purpose of their trip, they held firesides on the bus and watched Church movies such as *The Mountain of the Lord*.

In a journal compiled by those who were part of that first trip, Church members recalled their blessings, not their sacrifices. One sister wrote: “Today I am going to the temple for the first time. Yesterday I celebrated my 20th anniversary as a member of the Church—so many hours, days, and years of waiting and preparing. My heart is full of gratitude and happiness for my friends, priesthood leaders, and especially Jesus Christ, His Atonement, and this opportunity to go to the house of my Heavenly Father.”

A brother who was sealed to his wife and children on that trip said the temple gave him a glimpse of eternity. “I have no doubt that if we keep the covenants we make in the temple, we will have a happier and more abundant life,” he wrote. “I love my family, and I will do all I can to have them with me in the celestial kingdom.”

The Brazil Manaus Mission was created on July 1, 1990, to take the gospel to six states in northern Brazil. At the time, the Church was relatively unknown in those states and had few members. But as the Lord declared in the Book of Mormon, those who repent and come unto Him



**Architectural rendering
of the temple to be built in
Manaus, Brazil.**

will be numbered among His people in the latter days (see 3 Nephi 16:13).

Today there are eight stakes in the city of Manaus, in Amazonas State, additional stakes in the other states, and seven districts within the mission boundaries. As I contemplate the growth of the Church and the role that temples play in the Lord’s efforts to gather His children, my mind is drawn to His promise in the Book of Mormon: “Yea, and then shall the work commence, with the Father among all nations in preparing the way whereby his people may be gathered home to the land of their inheritance” (3 Nephi 21:28).

As a mission president in Manaus from 1990 to 1993, I saw many of the

Amazon people embrace the principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, join the Church, and “come in unto the covenant” (3 Nephi 21:22). As a result, the power of the priesthood began to bless their lives and their families—especially through the ordinances of the temple.

Church members in northern Brazil rejoiced in May 2007 when the First Presidency announced that a temple, Brazil’s sixth, would be built in Manaus. For the Martins family and the growing number of Latter-day Saints in northern Brazil, having a temple in Manaus will be a great blessing. For many Saints throughout the world, however, attending the temple will continue to require great sacrifice.

May those of us who live near a temple show our gratitude by increasing our temple attendance. And may we, like the Saints in northern Brazil, emulate the example of the Nephites who “did labor exceedingly” to gather to the temple “that they might be . . . where Jesus should show himself unto the multitude” (3 Nephi 19:3). ■

NOTE

1. *Hymns*, no. 287.