

Planting Gospel Seeds in My Mother's Heart

By Sonia Padilla-Romero

I joined the Church when I was 14 years old. My parents granted me permission to be baptized, but neither of them was interested in joining or even learning about the Church.

For more than 10 years, I yearned for my family to know the happiness I felt in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. I invited the missionaries and members to come over for dinner. My family was taught the missionary lessons multiple times, but nothing changed. During that decade, I attended church, received my endowment, and served a full-time mission without any family support.

When I returned home to Mexico following my mission at Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, I lived with my mother. (My parents had divorced while I was in high school.) I started working at the Mexico Missionary Training Center, so I cleverly invited her to come meet

the elders and sisters I was teaching. I subtly (and sometimes not so subtly) invited the missionaries serving in my ward to join my mother and me for dinner. I did everything I could to get her around missionaries, hoping that she might ask more about the gospel, but my efforts all seemed in vain.

I think she met every single set of missionaries I associated with during that three-year period, and still nothing happened.

In 2008, I moved to the United States to pursue a degree in nursing. Toward the end of the year, following extensive renovation, the Mexico City Mexico Temple held an open house. I urged my mother to go see what the temple was all about while she had this opportunity. After much prodding on my part, she agreed to make the 70-mile (113 km) drive to attend the open house.

When I spoke to her next, she gushed about what an amazing

I did everything I could think of to teach my mom about the Church, but a temple open house made all the difference.

experience she had had. She talked about how, in the celestial room, she felt something beautiful but indescribable. She told me that she had plans to return again. In fact, she was able to go many more times during the remaining weeks of the open house. She even attended the cultural celebration prior to the temple's rededication.*

The next time we talked on the phone, Mom told me she was going to invite the missionaries to teach her. Seemingly out of nowhere, she was asking questions and paying attention in ways that I had so long been hoping for. When I went home at Christmastime during my school break, I noticed that she was different. While she had always been kind and compassionate, there was a deep change in her—a conversion.

I returned to school amazed at what was taking place. A week later, Mom called and said, “Sonia, I just wanted to know when you’re coming back to Mexico, because I’m getting baptized.”

I was so excited, so happy! I flew home in February for her baptism. It was amazing to me to watch her attend church, to see her accept and serve in a calling, and to grow in the gospel. I knew that she knew it was true.

It was also powerful to hear her pray. I was especially touched to hear her pray for me and my safety just before I returned to the United States. There is nothing like a parent’s prayer for a child.

Why didn’t things happen sooner? I don’t know. Maybe my mother needed to have seeds planted in her life before she could accept the gospel. Maybe the temple touched her in a way and at a time that my earlier efforts couldn’t have. Seeing the Lord work in my mother’s life reminds me of times I have seen His hand in my

own life, and it gives me great hope for what He can unfold in the lives of my other family members.

My mother is now endowed, and every time we go to the temple together, I can tell she feels touched in the temple, just as she did when she attended the open house. I know that the Lord is aware of us and that He guides our lives. When I let Him lead my life, I end up in the right places. When I follow my own will, it takes longer and is generally harder. I prefer to let the Lord surprise me and show me what great things He has in store. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

* The Mexico City Mexico Temple was rededicated on November 16, 2008, by President Thomas S. Monson and, following a second renovation, was again rededicated on September 15, 2015, by President Henry B. Eyring.



THE BLESSINGS OF THE HOLY TEMPLE

“I invite you to make the blessings of the holy temple the beginning and the end of each missionary’s experience, including your own. By and through you, the temple will become a place of gathering for all those who join the fold of Christ.”

Bishop Gérald Caussé, Presiding Bishop, seminar for new mission presidents, June 27, 2015.

