



One Family's

A Paraguayan woman's firmness in her newfound faith started a tradition of gospel service that now links five generations of her family.

BY DON L. SEARLE
Church Magazines

The children of Eulogia Diaz and Delio Cosme Sanchez remember this about their mother's service as branch Primary president: Back when Primary was held on weekday afternoons, Eulogia would shepherd a large group of children from her neighborhood—"our little band," one of her daughters recalls—on the long walk to church each week. It didn't matter whether or not they were members; if they wanted to be there and their parents allowed it, Eulogia would bring them along. She wanted as many children as possible to enjoy the blessings of Primary.

The children of Eulogia and Delio remember this of their father's service as branch president: He was always first at the meetinghouse on Sunday morning and last to leave later in the day, after he had made sure everything was in order. He continued that same dedication as the first president of the Paraguay District, back when it was part of the Uruguay-Paraguay Mission.

The Sanchez children, now middle-aged, some with grandchildren of their own, remember this too: For their parents, there was never a good reason to miss Church meetings. The family made that long walk to the

meetinghouse rain or shine. And in those early years when there were fewer members in the branch, family members took on many roles from teaching or leading music to helping clean the building.

The Church has since made great strides in Paraguay. Now there are 10 stakes and 11 districts, with approximately 66,000 members. The country has two missions. Paraguay hosts one of only four Beehive Clothing plants, producing temple clothing and garments, outside the United States.

The historic meetinghouse everyone loved, the first Church-built meetinghouse in the country—the one that everyone called "the Moroni chapel" because that was the name of a ward housed there—is gone. A temple now stands in its place. The Asunción Paraguay Temple is the centerpiece of "la Manzana Mormona"—roughly translated, the Temple Square of Paraguay.

Paraguayan members feel greatly blessed because of the progress. But older members have not forgotten the sacrifices that were necessary to build the foundations of today's Church in their country.

Building a Heritage

Eulogia Diaz de Sanchez was baptized in October 1960. A parish priest tried to persuade her to renounce the Church and return to the parish, but she was too sure of the testimony she had gained to be dissuaded.


Her mother, Castorina, was baptized the following month, along with Eulogia's daughter, Liduvina. Another daughter, Lina, wanted to be baptized, but her new husband opposed it.

Eulogia's husband, Delio, joined the Church in January 1961. A mechanic, Delio told his business partner he would no longer be able to work on Sunday. His partner accepted that easily because he valued hard-working Delio

Heritage of Service

Members of the extended Sanchez family gather for a family party. Opposite page: The Asunción Paraguay Temple.





and his contribution to the business. The partner would never regret his decision.

The story of Delio and Eulogia Sanchez and their descendants underscores the enduring power of example.

“I believe my parents’ love and patience helped us live our lives sharing the gospel,” Lina says. Even though she was not able to be baptized at first, she served in the Church as faithfully as anyone could who was not a member. Eventually, in 1986, when her husband’s opposition had softened because of the example of his wife and children, Lina joyfully entered the waters of baptism.

Her sister, Liduvina, recalls that their parents were constantly involved in sharing the gospel. For a time in the 1970s, the family home, where the aged Eulogia still lives, served also as a meetinghouse on Sundays. In addition to the more than 60 descendants of Delio and Eulogia in the Church, there are more than two dozen other people who joined because of their example of Christlike living. Liduvina says her parents were also examples of honesty, teaching their children never to do anything of which they would later be ashamed.

Delio and Eulogia were known for their kindness. Liduvina recalls that when the family was ready to eat a meal, their father might say, thinking of someone nearby, “I wonder if so-and-so has a plate of food right now.” He would ask a family member to take a plate of food to that person before the family ate.

Lina and her family lived next door to her parents for many years. Lina’s son, Enrique Ojeda, says of Delio, “My grandfather was always an example of the priesthood—those qualities mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants section 121 [verses 41–45].” Enrique says his grandmother Eulogia “is a valiant woman—valiant in her faith and valiant in her testimony.” Many people who were not members of the Church came to live in his grandparents’ home for a time (when Delio and Eulogia generously offered needed help) and left as members of the Church because of their example.

The children of Delio and Eulogia followed parental

example as they grew into adulthood and started families of their own. They too have served in many Church callings. Liduvina served a mission and worked for the Church for many years in Uruguay before returning to her native Paraguay. Delio and Eulogia’s son Silvio needed some time before parental example also helped bring him into the Church, but he too followed his parents’ pattern of service. He later helped establish a branch in Argentina, where he lived for a time.

New Generations

Enrique was born the year his grandfather Delio was baptized into the Church. Growing up, he frequently spent time with his grandparents next door or with his aunts, all of whom were active in the Church. (He calls Liduvina his second mother.) Though his father and mother were not members in his early years, “my brothers and sisters and I grew up in the Church.”

His father, Vicente, he recalls, wanted nothing to do with the Church—did not even want to talk about it. When Vicente’s children tried to give him a Book of Mormon, he literally tossed it back at them. But, Enrique says, “it was the example of his children that eventually changed my father.” Enrique’s patriarchal blessing promised that his father would join the Church because of the example of his children. Enrique and the rest of the family clung to that promise.

In 1986, while Enrique’s younger brother was serving a mission, their father’s opposition to the Church had softened enough for him to give consent for his wife to be baptized. After 25 years of attending and serving as she could, Lina was finally a member. Her husband, however, was far from ready to take that step. Family life went on for several more years with everyone but Vicente as a member of the Church. Then one Sunday morning in 2002, Vicente got up and dressed in his suit, ready to go to church—ready to be taught. He was baptized shortly afterward, and he and his wife were sealed in the temple in 2003.

Now Enrique’s generation has children who are

growing up in the Church, following in their own parents' footsteps. Eulogia and Delio's descendants in the Church include 6 children, 18 grandchildren (4 of whom served missions), and 23 great-grandchildren—so far. The choices that these great-grandchildren make are shaped by the teachings they receive in their homes.

Enrique's 19-year-old daughter, Adriana, says that of course there will always be temptations to face in life. When she and her siblings and cousins face them, she says, "We make the choices we make because of our testimonies." Her 18-year-old sister, Vivian, adds that when friends or acquaintances wonder why they do not smoke or drink or take part in some of the other practices that their friends have adopted, the opportunity to explain their standards is an opportunity to be a missionary.

William Da Silva, 19, is another of Eulogia's great-grandchildren; he is a son of Lina's daughter, Mercedes Ojeda de Da Silva. Like his mother, William was baptized at age eight and grew up in the Church. His older sister and brother have served missions, and now he is serving in the Uruguay Montevideo West Mission. William says that because of the teachings they have received in their homes, he, his brother and sister, and his cousins who are active in the Church operate from a different, stronger spiritual foundation than many of their friends. "It's interesting how much our friends or their parents have confidence in us," he comments. Parents of his friends, he explains, often tell their sons or daughters that if William or someone like Adriana or Vivian is attending an event, "then you can go too, because I know nothing bad will be going on."



Maintaining Their Standards

Adriana wears a long skirt that has been altered by the insertion of a panel in the side seam to close up what would have been a high slit. Her mother, Lydia (Enrique's wife), and her aunt Mercedes point out that it is often difficult for Paraguayan women to find modest clothing in stores, so the Sanchez descendants have done what others are often forced to do—make their own alterations or sew their own clothing. Lina, Mercedes' mother and Lydia's mother-in-law, has served as family seamstress, but now the younger women are also learning sewing skills.

Mercedes de Da Silva says life was not particularly hard for her while she was growing up as one of a few Latter-day Saints in her neighborhood. "My friends all knew I was a member of the Church," she explains. "They respected my beliefs." She says she was fortunate also to attend a Latter-day Saint school that existed in Paraguay for a time. "For my children, this stage of life is much more difficult than it was for me." The standards

Eulogia Diaz de Sanchez (center) led the way into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for her family in 1960. Daughters Liduvina (left) and Lina learned of serving in the Church by watching their parents' examples, and they in turn have passed this heritage of service on to their descendants.



Three great-grand-children of Eulogia Diaz de Sanchez take part in family home evening. From left: Eduardo, Adriana, and Vivian Ojeda. They are children of Eulogia's grandson Enrique and his wife, Lydia.

of society are now far more permissive. Mercedes says she and her husband, Ernesto Da Silva, have maintained high standards in their home, including a curfew even for their older children. “We talk a lot with them about the gospel, and we have family home evenings,” she says. “It’s a great strength for our children, and they know that.” President Ernesto Da Silva was released as an Area Seventy in April of this year and is now serving as president of the Uruguay Montevideo Mission.

The Da Silvas’ son and daughter who served missions, Christian and Karen, wrote home, in fact, to thank their parents for the high standards they were taught and for strong parental examples. Karen Da Silva, who returned from the Argentina Córdoba Mission in 2008, explains: “Since I was small, my grandparents and my parents have taught me not only by their words but also by their actions. They really lived what they taught.” What she had learned in her home, she says, helped her as a missionary to teach of the

blessings that come through obedience.

Christian, who recently returned from the California San Bernardino Mission, echoes his sister’s comments about the importance of parental example in his life and adds, “My own testimony of the gospel grew as I applied the teachings of my parents and grandparents in my life.” This happened in the way Alma described. Christian explains that he made a place in his heart for the seed to be sown, his parents taught him the

truth, and he saw in their lives that the fruit of the seed was good (see Alma 32:27–43). “I hope to go on nurturing with faith, nurturing the tree—my testimony—so it will take root, grow, and go on producing fruit.”

Mercedes de Da Silva recalls that as a young girl, when she saw the effect of gospel living on her parents’ and grandparents lives, “I always thought, ‘When I grow up, I will do the same.’”

Her brother Enrique says gospel living offers certain keys to rearing children in faith. “Three things: teach them the word, teach them by example, and help them learn the gospel as a way of life.”

Through the gospel, he says, his and his wife’s children, along with others reared in Latter-day Saint homes in Paraguay, can put down spiritual roots that many other young people do not have. “Their lives have a path—a purpose,” Enrique says. Their goals are eternal, and with the help of faithful, obedient parents, they are learning how to achieve them. ■