

SEEKING ETIENE

A few weeks before leaving to serve a full-time mission, I went to visit the home of an old friend who was not a member of the Church. I intended to stay for just a few minutes, but due to a heavy rainstorm, I had to stay longer than anticipated. So my friend, his mother, and I sat down and began to talk about the Church and my upcoming mission.

I explained that I might be assigned to serve in cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, or Brasília.

For some reason, my friend's mother decided to give me the address of her sister who lived in a town near Rio de Janeiro. She said that I should go and visit her if I were ever sent there.

I left for my mission on July 7, 1982. I served in many different cities,

including one near the place my friend's aunt lived. I thought about visiting her, but her home was not in my area. I didn't tell the missionaries assigned to that area about her because I was still hoping I would be able to go myself.

At that time, missionaries served for 18 months. The time passed without seeing my friend's aunt and her family.

Years later, while attending a ward social, I happened to see my non-member friend. I learned that he had been invited by one of his relatives, an aunt named Etiene who had recently been baptized into the Church. I then found out that Aunt Etiene had just moved into our ward from the state of Rio de Janeiro. I quickly came to love his aunt Etiene, and we loved to talk

together about our memories of Rio de Janeiro. To my embarrassment, I learned that she was the same woman I wanted to visit during my mission. She had been baptized only recently, after the unexpected death of her husband.

Fortunately, she has forgiven me for not encouraging other missionaries to visit her. However, she was disappointed over the time she lost while she was not enjoying the blessings of the gospel.

Regrets such as these are not felt just by returned missionaries but may also come to all of us if we neglect to heed the promptings of the Spirit, whether that means inviting friends to come to a Church activity or giving a referral to the missionaries. Let us go to the Lord and ask for inspiration. He will speak to us by the still, small voice of the Spirit. He will give us the help we need to do missionary work with dedication and love. ■

Elson Carlos Ferreira Paraná, Brazil

