

## Journey to Chile

Contributed by  
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Susan Engle, a Bahá'í from Lindenhurst, IL shares with us about her recent travels to Chile.

December in Chile. The heat meets us in waves as we leave the airport. I strike up a conversation with the young man who is showing us where to meet our bus into Santiago. "Tell me what you know in Spanish," he encourages me. "Bahá'u'lláh es la Gloria de Dios"

The first sentence I had learned in Spanish over 30 years ago in El Salvador comes tumbling out. "Ah, Bahá'í." His eyes light up. "I know the Bahá'í cathedral." I look amazed to him, I'm certain. "En Santiago," he reassures me. "It is very beautiful." I nod yes, knowing that the House of Worship hasn't been built yet, but pleased at his recognition. More than once in the week spent in the capital of Chile, a mention of the Bahá'í Faith brought the same exclamations of appreciation. Maybe I will see the Temple site after all.

Traveling with my mother of 85 years is fun and gentle. Many an afternoon siesta time is spent resting and playing Scrabble or gin rummy. Not enough time or energy in our late-starting days for me to pursue a trip to the top of a hill where the House of Worship will rise some day. I sigh as we go back to the airport to fly to Valdivia, a city in central Chile, where Mom and I will attend the Bahá'í wedding of my youngest niece, sorry to have missed the opportunity, but thrilled to be able to participate in the wedding ceremony.

Evening falls, and I meet mi sobrino Bahá'í, Eduardo Rioseco and his family. The welcome is so loving that I am immediately at ease. In fact, one of the first things that the groom's father says to me is, "We are so happy that Eduardo has his Bahá'í tia here for him at his wedding." I never want to leave this place and these lovely people.

Leaving the dear friends made in such a short time in Valdivia was not easy. I felt as if our hearts were knitted together with bands of steel. Off we flew, back to the cold and snow of December in Chicago, cherishing the warmth generated from this trip of thousands of miles to Chile. There is no doubt in my mind. I will do what I can to return for the dedication of the Temple when the time comes.