



One Year,

Three goals led to great things for these young men from England.

By Martin Reid

The Aaronic Priesthood quorums in a ward in Worcestershire, England, began the year like many others—setting goals. They came together to plan ways to do more to honour their priesthood and fulfil their personal duty to their Heavenly Father. Everyone generated ideas, and soon the blackboard was full of worthy endeavours.

The ideas were then grouped into three main goals:

1. Attend the temple at least twice to perform baptisms for the dead.
2. Work diligently on their current portion of Duty to God.
3. Increase the membership of each quorum by one, either through baptism or activation.

The young men recognised that the first two goals were things that were mostly down to them to achieve but that the third would require the Lord's hand. They left that day excited and confident that these goals, though not easy, were definitely achievable through diligence and committed action.

A Good Beginning

The year began well. The missionaries were blessed to find and teach Craig Smith, then 17 years old. Though at the time there



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MARTIN REID

3 Goals



were no priests in their ward, Craig was welcomed by all the young men and fit in well.

“I was made to feel so welcome by the other young men and quickly felt comfortable being around them, even though they knew much more about the Church than I did,” Craig recounts. “It was hard letting go of some of the things that I used to do with my friends before I joined the Church, but I know that living the gospel will make me much happier.”

Fulfilling Their Duty

As the year progressed, the young men did all they could to fulfil their goals, and their leaders helped them focus and stay on track as they carried out their Duty to God.

John Nolan remembers, “At the time I remember lacking some motivation and wanted to avoid the subject with our adviser, but I recognise now how those progress sessions really helped push me to do more than I would have done on my own, and I felt really good doing my Duty to God, knowing that I had achieved something worthwhile.”

Deacons Mason Krstic and Elliot Stobbs also needed support from their quorum adviser. Elliot recalls, “Our Young Men

Young men in Worcestershire, England, found joy as they worked on their goals for their Aaronic Priesthood quorums, including attending the temple, working on Duty to God, and increasing quorum membership.

leaders would tell us how important it was to carry out our Duty to God, and at first I didn't understand why. But by the end of the year I had had so many great experiences that I knew why they encouraged us to do this."

Michael Deamer remembers, "Duty to God is amazing. I've learned so much, from climbing a mountain to sewing a button on my shirt! It really has pushed me to develop talents and knowledge in areas which I never thought I would be interested in."

Top of the list of great experiences the young men had that year were the temple trips they took to both the London and Preston temples. Michael Stanley recalls how there was even a special spirit during the three-hour journey. "It is always fun to go together in a minibus. I think it has really helped to build unity within the youth."

One Last Goal

As December approached, however, it looked like the third goal would not be achieved, although the young men had done their part. They had worked diligently on their Duty to God, attended the temple, and strengthened their quorum unity. They had also taken part in many different missionary challenges, like going out with the missionaries, inviting friends to youth activities and church, and placing copies of the Book of Mormon.

Little did they know that the Lord had been preparing people's hearts to hear the gospel.

In November the Young Men president introduced the missionaries to his neighbours, Portuguese women whom he had spoken with about the Church as they had been introduced to it previously in Portugal. These women quickly saw what good the gospel could do for their sons, Patrick Pereira and Miguel Lima, and asked the missionaries to teach them.

Patrick and Miguel progressed very quickly and loved



coming out to the youth activities as they felt great excitement and friendship whilst they were there. "It was quite exciting," Miguel remembers. "I got to meet new people and find good friends."

A baptism date of December 19 was set by the missionaries, who were not conscious of the young men's goals. But the Lord was, and this was recognised by all the young men.

The Lord had been preparing the hearts of Patrick and Miguel, who were of deacon and teacher age, respectively. Together with Craig, their baptisms meant that each quorum had increased by one, which exactly matched the goal the quorums had prayerfully set. On their baptismal day, most of the ward members were there to see these two young men make a sacred covenant with their Heavenly Father.

"It felt right," Patrick remembers. After being baptised, he says that he felt "like a blank slate, a new beginning."

Matt Stobbs says, "It was amazing when I found out they were to both be baptised just before the end of the year. It made me feel that Heavenly Father really knows us and is watching over His children individually and is aware of our struggles and our goals."

Paul Stobbs, bishop of the ward, says, "I can only describe the events that led to the young men's goals being met as miraculous. I know that Heavenly Father recognised their faith and dedication to the gospel and subsequently blessed their efforts. Being witnesses to these events has inspired all members of the ward to show more faith."

These young men really caught the vision of Alma and his missionary spirit. Patrick and Miguel are now attending early-morning seminary and are thankful for what has been added to their lives.

"My life will never be the same," Miguel says. "I am really glad that we were taught by the missionaries."

"Me too," adds Patrick. "It is really good to have good friends who encourage me to do good things. And we have a lot of fun too." **NE**

Editor's note: British spellings have been preserved.

As the end of the year drew closer—as well as the deadline for the quorum goals—two new young men joined the Aaronic Priesthood quorums after being baptised.