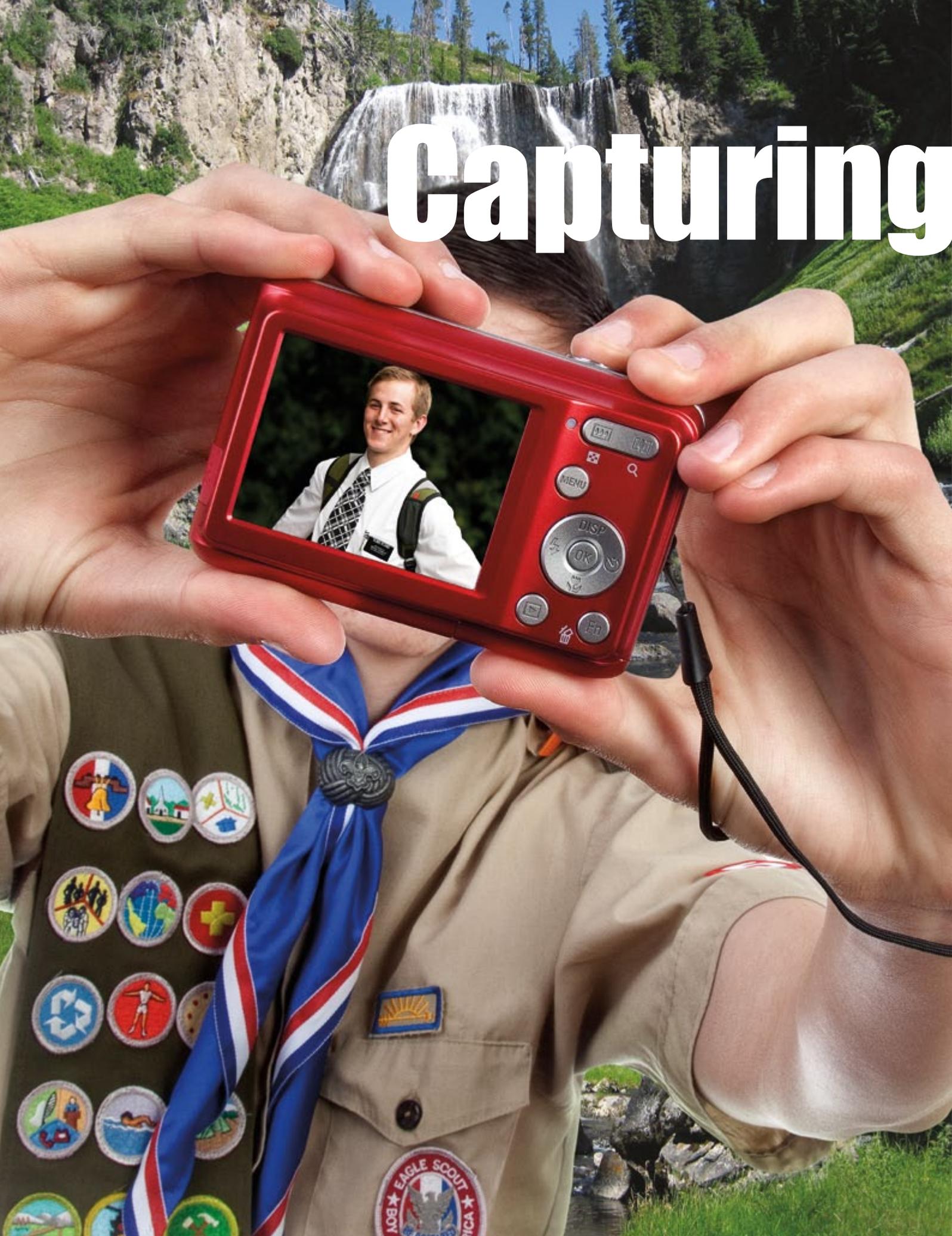


Capturing



the Vision of SCOUTING

By David L. Beck
Young Men
General President



Our efforts as Young Men advisers and Scout leaders can have eternal consequences.

When I was a mission president, one particular zone was having a lot of success. I asked one of the zone leaders, “Elder, what’s going on here?”

He said, “President, in high school I ran cross-country with a handful of friends. We trained hard and competed together. For four years none of us could break a certain time barrier on the 5K. But at a cross-country race during our senior year, one of us finally broke that barrier. Then, within seven days of that meet, the whole group had broken the time barrier.”

The cross-country runners—like the missionaries in that zone—succeeded because, in the zone leader’s words, “they *believed* they could do it.”

Young Men advisers called by inspiration to serve in Scouting can succeed too. But a believing attitude requires that they be strong in the Spirit, committed to strengthening the young men they serve, and properly trained.



Learning Our Duty

One of the tools Satan uses against the Church is to convince priesthood holders that they can do tomorrow what they should do today. But the Lord tells us, “Wherefore, *now* let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence” (D&C 107:99; emphasis added).

This counsel is foundational to any calling we receive in the Church, including callings in Scouting. And a key word to this counsel is *now*.

In a program as demanding as Scouting, some leaders are concerned and tentative and might feel inadequate or overwhelmed. These feelings are normal. The best way to deal with such feelings is to just jump in—*now*. The Lord has called you, and He will qualify you¹ and bless you to the degree that you learn your responsibilities and magnify your calling.

Training is essential to understanding Scouting and feeling confident that we can implement the program. Training motivates us to succeed because as we develop a



THE POWER OF SCOUTING

“Impossible to measure is the great good which has come from this organization during the past century.

. . . I believe in Scouting. I believe in the goals of the organization. I believe in the power of Scouting to bless and enrich lives for good.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “President Monson Discusses Strengths of Scouting,”
<http://lds.org/study/prophets-speak-today/unto-all-the-world/president-monson-discusses-strengths-of-scouting>.



degree of mastery, we gain confidence that we really can be successful Scout leaders. We hope Young Men advisers, in addition to receiving training, are given enough time in their Scout callings to make a difference in the lives of the young men they serve.

Young Men advisers in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints should be the best implementers of Scouting in the world. Training is an important step toward that end.

Strengthening Young Men

Scouting is more than camping and merit badges. Scouting is spirituality, duty, growth, and leadership. When the Church adopted Scouting in 1913, leaders wanted a program that would develop and strengthen young men. Properly trained leaders can better understand Scouting and appreciate the program’s potential to help young men grow.

We have a legacy of doing hard things in the Church. We’ve always done hard things, and we will continue to do hard things. Hard things stretch us and allow us to bless others. Our youth are the future of the Church, and they must be prepared for difficult days

ahead. Scouting is one way to help prepare our young men to do hard things, such as serve as faithful full-time missionaries.

When properly implemented, Scouting and Duty to God strengthen faith in Jesus Christ, character, relationships, and skills. In addition, they provide opportunities for young men to develop abilities that are essential to the priesthood ministry to which they are called, such as leading and serving.

Scouting and Duty to God help prepare young men to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and temple ordinances and to bless others as full-time missionaries. Scouting has proved for many young men to be a major component in building a bridge to activity in the kingdom of God.

Scouting’s outdoor program is part of its message of self-reliance, but it’s more than that. It’s a relationship-building program in which young men work with each other and with their advisers, doing things that stretch them physically and emotionally. It puts them in contact with nature, freeing them from the distractions of a world that is growing increasingly noisy. And it allows them an opportunity



to commune with the Spirit and to reflect upon their lives and their relationships, including their relationship with Deity.

Being Strong in the Spirit

“If any man among you be strong in the Spirit,” the Lord tells us, “let him take with him him that is weak, that he may be edified in all meekness, that he may become strong also” (D&C 84:106).

If there ever were a time when our young men needed to associate with adult advisers who are strong in the Spirit, that time is now. As leaders of young men, we have the blessing of working with them during the time that they transition from childhood to adulthood. It is a time fraught with temptations and challenges. What a great privilege and an awesome responsibility we have.

Young men need to be guided, motivated, and strengthened by those who are strong in the Spirit. They need to discover through spiritual experiences the intrinsic motivation of being a disciple of Christ—to taste for themselves the fruits of the gospel and of the Spirit.

Young men need to know that their leaders are men of God who can be trusted, who truly care about them, and who take seriously their Scout callings. Trusted leaders can become a powerful resource to help and bless young men.

To “edify in meekness” means to build up in meekness. A meek man edifies young men with patience, gentleness, and an absolute commitment to do God’s will. Confidence and trust are built in young men when they feel that their leaders have the Spirit of the Lord with them.

The Lord also tells us, “Therefore, . . . let not the head say unto the feet it hath no need of the feet; for without the feet how shall the body be able to stand?” (D&C 84:109).



Just as the feet provide support for the physical body, so does the Aaronic Priesthood help support and strengthen the Church. For the body—the Church—to stand now and in the future, we need to acknowledge and honor the Aaronic Priesthood by helping our young men become strong in the Spirit.



Contemplate a simple 14-year-old farm boy with limited formal education. God took him and trusted him to be His instrument in the Restoration of the Church in this dispensation. When you look at a young man, think of Joseph Smith and realize that any young man—with God’s priesthood power—has the capacity to do great things *now*.



Becoming Shepherds of Young Men

Thank Heavenly Father for this season in your life to influence young men. Be there

for them and give them a vision of what they can become as they learn their duty as priesthood holders—whether they are wearing a Scout uniform or a white shirt and tie.

Young men need shepherds, and we need to be the kind of shepherds God expects us to be (see Ezekiel 34:1–16). Our efforts as Young Men advisers and Scout leaders can have eternal consequences (see Jacob 1:17–19).

The adversary does not want us to act, and he will do everything he can to deter us. I pray that we will press forward in preparing the young men of this Church by engaging them in good and glorious things—the great work of the Aaronic Priesthood and the wonderful Scouting program. ■

NOTE

1. See Thomas S. Monson, “Our Sacred Priesthood Trust,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2006, 57.



Why I Love 50-Mile Hikes

By David C. Pack

Director of LDS-BSA Relationships
from 2007 to 2012

I love 50-mile (80 km) hikes, not so much because they're fun but because they teach young men to do hard things.

Most young men who start 50-milers think they're prepared, but it doesn't take long—just a few miles up that first ridge—before they wonder who talked them into it. That night, unlike on other camps, they're quiet and they go to bed early rather than stay up late talking.

The next morning, there's a solemn feeling in the camp—not a lot of discussion. And as the young men start their climb again, they contemplate life and death. By that afternoon they're missing their mothers and wondering whether they'll ever see them again.

By the second night around the campfire, you have the most teachable, ready-to-learn, ready-to-listen-to-the-Spirit young men you will ever see. You won't see them that way in priesthood meeting or at home or at school or on activity night. As a result, there will be an opportunity around that campfire for testimony bearing and teaching that will sink deep into their hearts and that they will remember for a lifetime.

Such experiences require dedicated adult leaders who are willing to get out with the young men,

mentor them, allow them to lead, and be there for them.

By the last day of a 50-miler, the young men feel that they have accomplished the hardest thing they've ever done—and they've survived! They go home realizing that doing better in school and serving a mission may not be so difficult after all. The bar has been raised for them. In the process they come to love and appreciate their parents more, and they can't wait to see them again.

When we do and teach hard things,

we bring young men to a level of competence and confidence that prepares them for the future—the opportunity to serve an honorable mission, be successful in school, become a worthy husband and father, and do other things the Lord expects of them.

That's why a functioning Aaronic Priesthood quorum is so important in the life of a young man. When we successfully integrate Duty to God and Scouting into an Aaronic Priesthood program, we help the priesthood quorum strengthen its young men and prepare them for the future. ■

