



By Charles W. Dahlquist II

Served as Young Men general president from 2004 to 2009

EARLY SUNDAY MORNING

These young men in Fiji get up early and walk a long way, but they eagerly do their duty.

It's Saturday evening in the Waila Ward of the Nausori Fiji Stake. The responsibilities of the day are fulfilled, and holders of the Aaronic Priesthood have prepared for the Sabbath and are now gathered at the home of Brother and Sister Maiwiriwiri. It is an opportunity for them to have a small meal before beginning their fast—followed by an evening sleeping on mats in the Maiwiriwiris' home.

Morning for these young men of the Aaronic Priesthood comes early. Long before daybreak, they quickly arise, don their white shirts and ties and their dark slacks, and by 6:00 a.m. they have left the home of Brother and Sister Maiwiriwiri in pairs—much like missionaries. Each of these companionships has a specific route to take in order to get to the chapel by 10:00 a.m., when priesthood meeting begins. Their

responsibility is to stop at each member's home on their route and invite them to contribute fast offerings.

These young men walk three miles (5 km) from the Maiwiriwiris' home at one end of the ward to the meetinghouse at the other end of the ward. This is an opportunity to fulfill their duty and invite members of the Church to participate in the great work of caring for the widows and for their brothers and sisters by contributing fast offerings. President Alipate Tagidugu of the Nausori Fiji Stake commented that as

The teacher's duty is to watch over the church always, and to be with them and strengthen them; . . . and also see that all the members do their duty" (D&C 20:53, 55).

a result of this effort by the Aaronic Priesthood, fast offering contributions have gone up 20 percent.

Just as important, these young men have an opportunity to fulfill their duty and help the members of the ward keep their covenants made at baptism:

"As ye are desirous to come into





What a blessing for these priesthood bearers to know they have invited members to come closer to the Savior.

The day starts early, but with smiles these young men walk from one end of the ward to the other, gathering fast offerings along the way.

the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;

“Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life” (Mosiah 18:8–9).

For these great young men, collecting fast offerings is not a burden but a blessing. They gladly wear their white shirts and ties, eagerly rise early, and willingly knock on the doors of the members in the early-morning hours to invite them to partake of the blessings that come from giving a

generous fast offering.

As I watched these young men prepare for and fulfill their duty as priesthood holders, I thought what a wonderful blessing it will be to them throughout their lives to understand the significance of their efforts in inviting members of the Church to come closer to the Savior through giving fast offerings. How much better missionaries they will be, and how much better husbands and fathers they will be as a result of their priesthood efforts.

They will better understand this scripture about the Lord's people: “The Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them” (Moses 7:18). **NE**