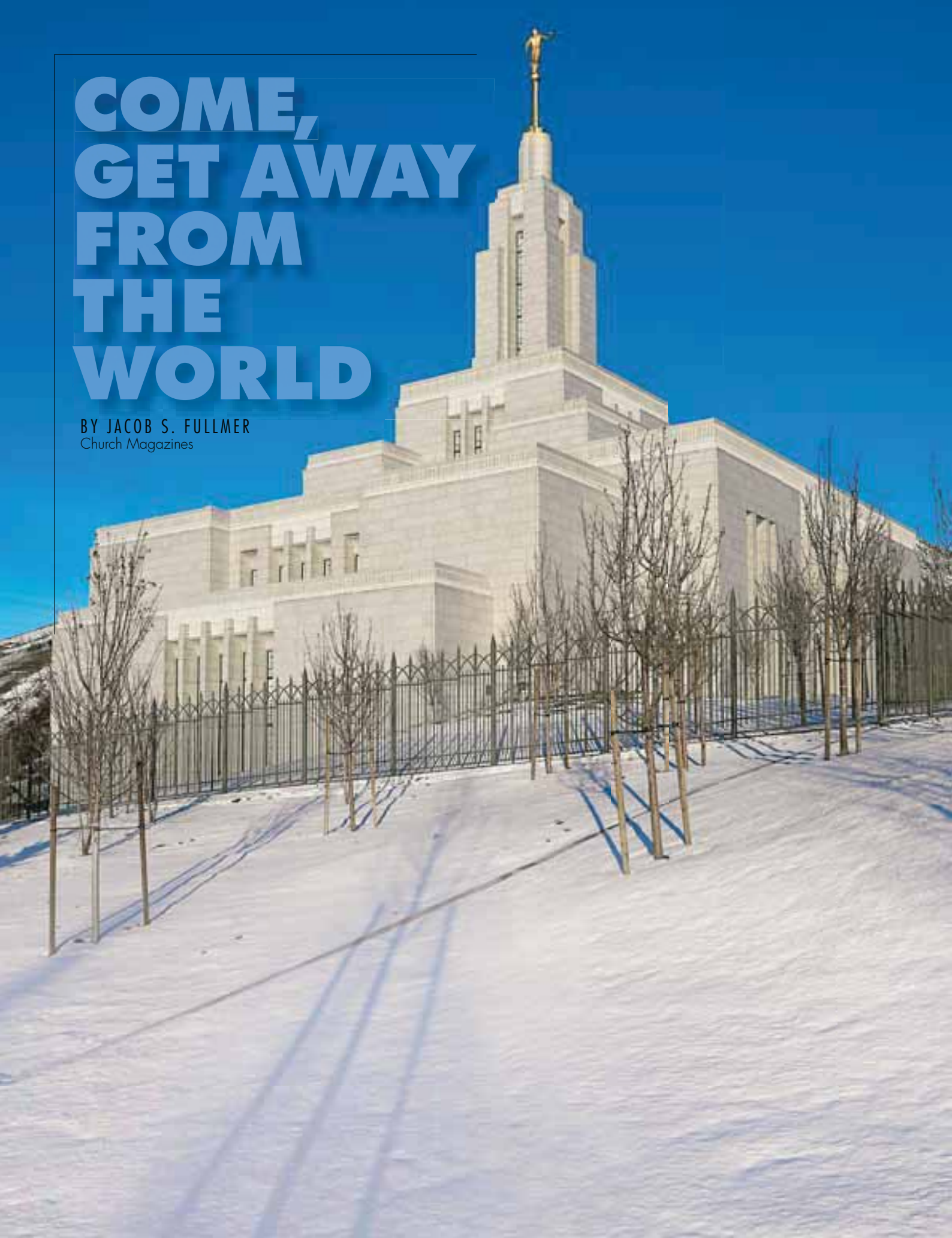


COME, GET AWAY FROM THE WORLD

BY JACOB S. FULLMER
Church Magazines



Temples offer peace the world can't provide. A recent temple open house gave these youth a deeper look inside.



Why prepare for the temple? After attending an open house for the Draper Utah Temple, some 60 teens from the Bluffridge and Whisperwood Wards of the Syracuse Utah South Stake have plenty of answers.

And they also have a one-word definition of their experience: "Cool."

Yes, *cool*. And it's not because they got to see the beautiful windows, carpets, and paintings. It's because they know the feeling of the temple comes from a remarkably rare peace available inside.

"You get the coolest feeling and know that it's a holy place," says Tyson Clark, 14.

The Syracuse youth laughed and talked together as they arrived. But noise dropped to whispers as they entered the lower level of the temple itself, through polished brass-and-glass doors that lead to the baptistry. Their eyes were as wide as their smiles.

"When you come through the door, everyone stops talking," Tyson says.

Ryan Tucker, 16, says, "I noticed the peace and serenity the moment I walked in." It helped him to leave worries of the world behind.

*"I noticed the
peace and serenity
the moment
I walked in."*



Service Counts

Looking at the exterior of a temple can often provide a feeling of peace. But many of these youth, who have already participated in baptisms for the dead in other temples, know that one of the great things that goes on inside is serving others. "I know that I'm helping people who can't be baptized for themselves," Ryan says.

Tyson's sister, McKenna, 16, remembers feeling nervous her first time doing baptisms for the dead. But at the open house, when she saw the Draper temple font supported by 12 white oxen, it reminded her of the blessings of temple service.

"Just entering the temple helps you feel a little calmer," she says. "But as you do baptisms, the feeling gets even better."

Leaving the baptistry, the Syracuse youth walked up a wide staircase to the second floor. Their heads kept swiveling as their long line slowly progressed past images of the Savior and paintings of local landscapes.

"It was nice looking around and noticing things by yourself," says Megan Skidmore, 15. "It's nice to get away from the world. It helps me feel like I have someplace to go if I ever feel alone."

As they stepped into the celestial room, quiet awe replaced already softened whispers. They craned their necks just enough to take in the detailed glass chandelier hanging in midair, with a high, vaulted ceiling overhead.

“It’s important to stay worthy so I can be married in the temple. It’s what I’ve wanted to do my whole life.”

Teens from the Syracuse Utah South Stake made an appointment to tour the Draper Utah Temple during its open house.

(Far right) Artist’s rendering of the Helsinki Finland Temple and photos of the open house and spire of the completed Finland temple.

Reflections on Eternity

Their final glimpse inside the temple included a short stop in one of its five sealing rooms. This was the favorite room of recently ordained deacon Stockton Stoker, age 12.

“When you look at the mirrors on either side of the altar, the reflections just keep going,” he says. “It represents that families can be together forever.”

McKenna says, “It’s important to stay worthy so I can be married in the temple. It’s what I’ve wanted to do my whole life.”

Perhaps the most important understanding the open house reinforced, however, was that the temple can already be a very real part of their lives. They each have their own ways of keeping an eye on the temple. Megan and Ryan like keeping pictures of a temple on their walls because it helps them remember what it’s like when they are there. McKenna suggests setting aside time to read the scriptures and what they say about the temple.



PREPARE

“As temples are prepared for our members, our members need to prepare for the temple.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings,” Ensign, May 2001, 32.

Stockton keeps it simple: “Keep being holy. Repent if you do something wrong. Just prepare to go to the temple.”

“It’s definitely worth it to go to the temple. You just have to remember what you’re on earth for,” says Tyson. “The temple is a place that can help us learn where we’re at spiritually and how to be a better person.”

In other words, by getting away from the world, we gain the perspective we need to get along in the world. And after all, isn’t that what we’re really after in life? **NE**

“Keep being holy. Repent if you do something wrong. Just prepare to go to the temple.”

NEmore

To see the video that was shown at the Draper temple open house, follow our link at newera.lds.org.



TOP LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINA SMITH; BACKGROUND PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

CELEBRATING THE TEMPLE IN FINLAND

BY ANNA CULP

The Helsinki Finland Temple was dedicated on October 22, 2006. Janna Koivu, 18, and Alekski Kiiikko, 17, were asked to share how they felt about the temple.

Janna says, “When the temple was finished and I went to the open house, I said it was the most beautiful building in Finland. I began to understand how very blessed we are to have our own temple.”

Alekski notes that even during construction, the workers (who are not always Latter-day Saints) honored the temple grounds by not cussing, not drinking, and not listening to inappropriate music.

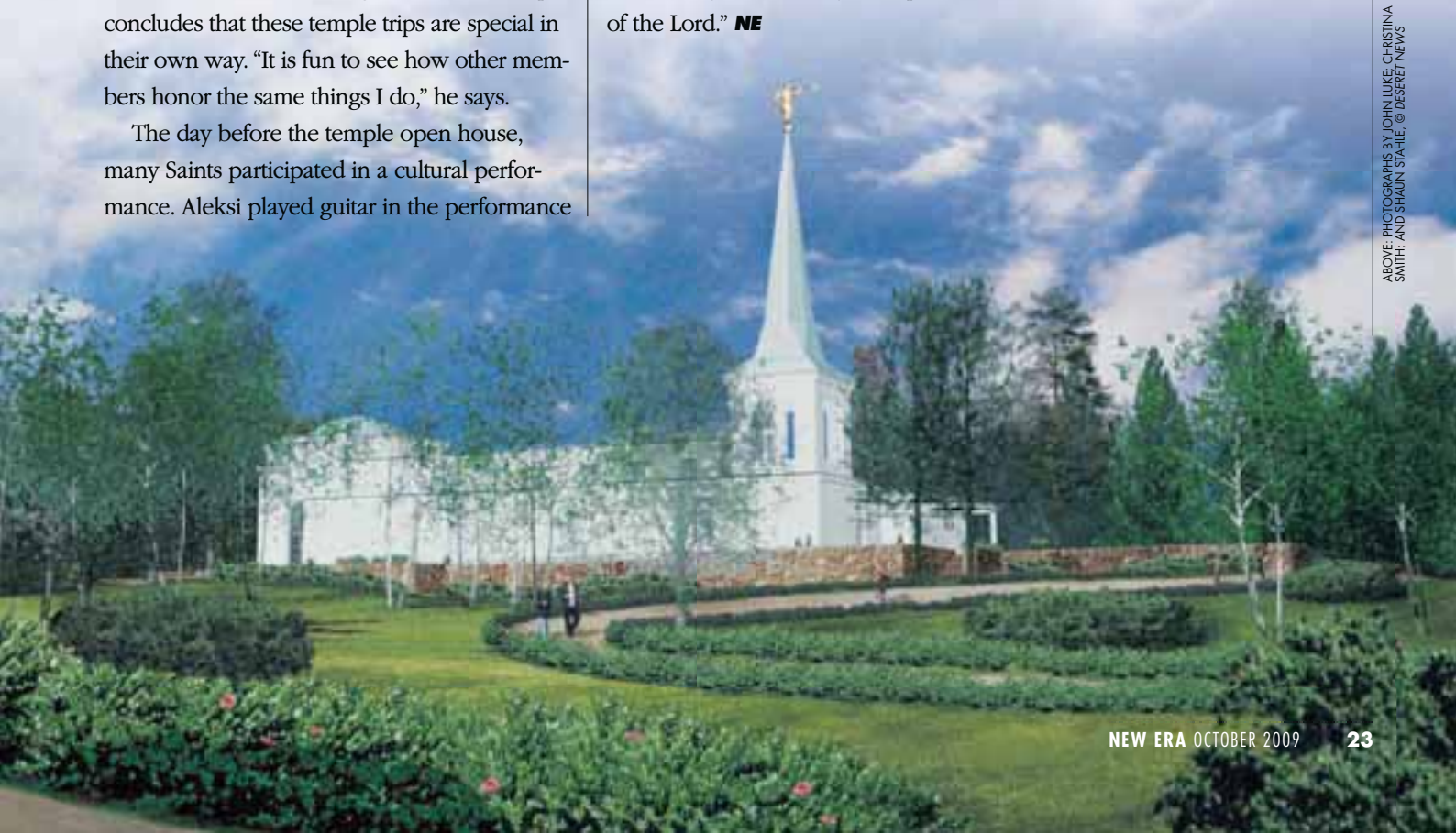
Before the Helsinki temple was dedicated, members of the Church traveled to the Stockholm Sweden Temple, which sometimes included a two-hour bus ride and an 11-hour overnight ship ride. Alekski says that at first, he was disappointed to lose the fun youth trips to Sweden, but after attending the Helsinki temple, concludes that these temple trips are special in their own way. “It is fun to see how other members honor the same things I do,” he says.

The day before the temple open house, many Saints participated in a cultural performance. Alekski played guitar in the performance

and listened to the speakers, including President Gordon B. Hinckley. He also participated in the open house, and his mother sang in a choir. “My best experience was to hear the prophet and to see him with my own eyes. My testimony was strengthened,” Alekski said.

Janna describes her favorite experience of the dedication: “I was grateful and very moved, and also felt great peace. My eyes moistened when I got to raise my hand and wave the small white handkerchief three times in the air with everyone else and with the prophet.” She keeps the handkerchief as a reminder of that day.

Janna and Alekski have strengthened their testimonies through temple attendance. Janna says, “I believe temples are a small piece of heaven on earth. Temple attendance inspires me to repent and live so that I can enter worthily into the temple to perform baptisms for the dead and, later in my life, other covenants.” Alekski says, “I believe temples are the Lord’s house. I try to honor temples as well as I can and try to live so that every time I go to the bishop for a temple recommend, I can without a doubt say I am worthy to step in the house of the Lord.” **NE**



ABOVE: PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN LUKE, CHRISTINA SMITH, AND SHAUN STAHL, © DESERTNEWS