

Drawn to the Temple

When Aric Finucane learned that he could enter the Washington D.C. Temple by joining the Church, he embraced the gospel with a determination to receive his endowment.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL R. MORRIS

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As a child, Aric Finucane couldn't help but notice the Washington D.C. Temple towering over the Capital Beltway. Its inviting luminescence above I-495, after all, is hard to ignore.

"I often wondered about the large castle-like building that seemed to rise up out of nowhere as I would ride with

my parents around the beltway," Aric says. "At some point I learned that in order to enter that beautiful building, I had to be a member of the LDS Church. I was under the impression that the only way to become a Latter-day Saint was to be born into the Church or to marry into the Church. I wasn't born into the Church, and I thought my chances of finding and marrying a Mormon girl were pretty unlikely. So I was fairly confident I would never enter the temple."

While waiting in the temple visitors' center before a fire-side, Aric experienced a prompting. "I saw a man across the room I knew I had to meet," he says.

Many people drawn to the temple are more optimistic about entering it, says William H. Child, director of the temple visitors' center. But they're disappointed when they learn that they can't just walk in. "We tell them they can enter, but first they have to get baptized and live temple standards."

Aric was one of those who chose to get baptized and prepare himself for the temple. A student of both Western and Eastern religious philosophies who enjoyed "spiritual conversation" as

he grew older, Aric

accepted an invitation in December 2004 to attend the Festival of Lights program at the temple visitors' center. Upon entering the center, he approached two sister missionaries.

"They shared a message that made an impression on me," Aric recalls. When they asked him to fill out a referral card so they might teach him more about the Church and its doctrines, Aric hesitated.

"I went outside, looked at the lights, and had the impression that I should not wait but should fill out the card," he says. "I didn't

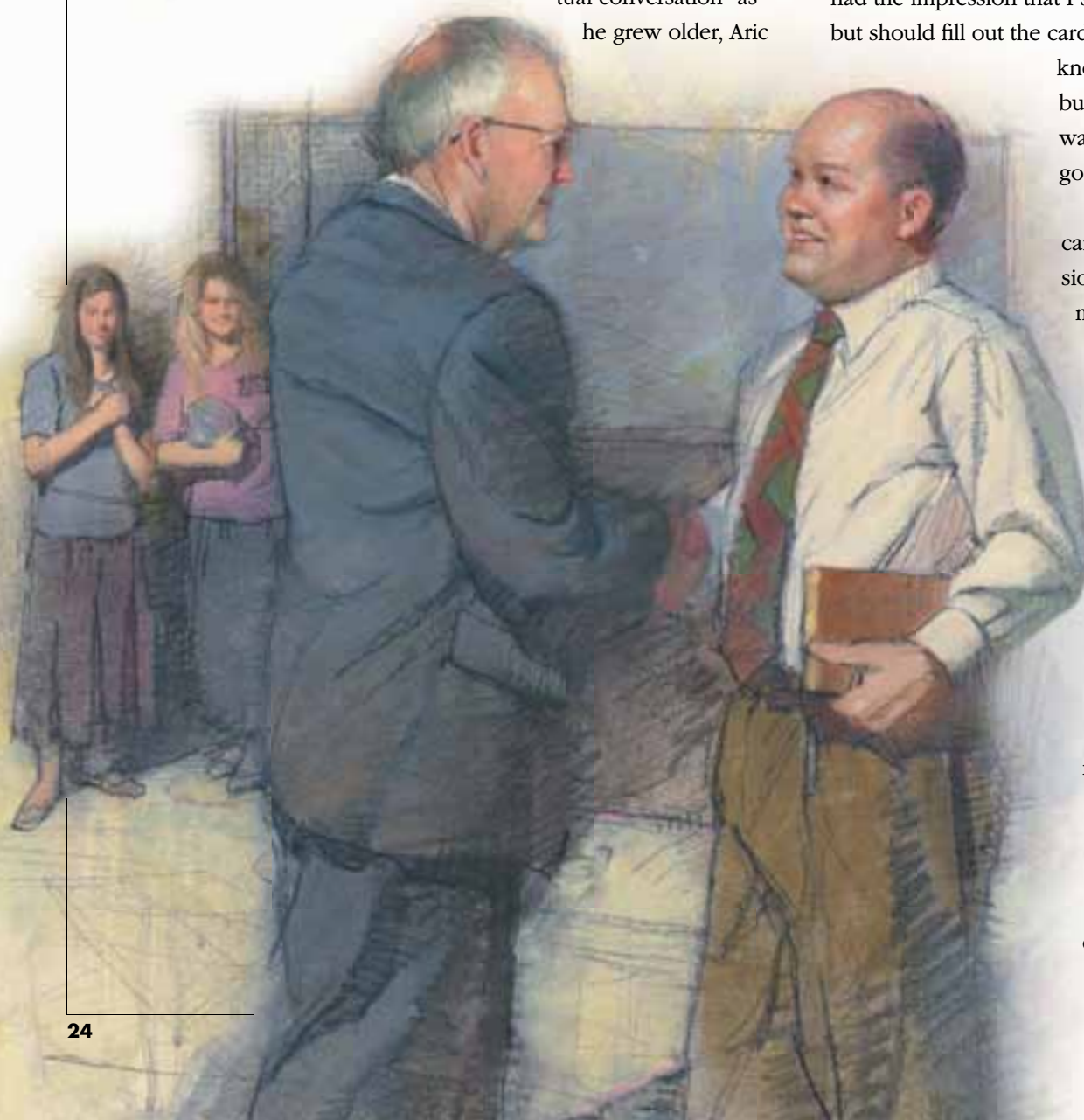
know it at the time, but the Holy Ghost was prompting me to go back in."

He turned in the card, and the missionaries soon began meeting him in the visitors' center.

During his first discussion, they asked him to read aloud from the Book of Mormon.

"As I read I found that my dyslexia did not bother me, which I found odd," he says. He experienced a bigger surprise during his second discussion.

"I learned that I



could become a member!” he says. “That was a big surprise because I believed that the missionaries were only teaching me about Latter-day Saint beliefs so that I might understand them better. I’m glad I was wrong.”

By embracing the gospel and joining the Church, Aric realized, he would be able to enter the temple. “All my life I had believed that was not an option,” he says. Learning that he could become a member “was an experience of joy and happiness. Once I learned that I could go to the temple, I was determined to do whatever I had to do to go.”

“Why Aren’t You Baptized?”

While taking the missionary discussions, Aric attended a “Why I Believe” fireside at the visitors’ center, where he experienced another prompting.

“While I was waiting in the lobby before the meeting, I saw a man across the room I knew I had to meet,” he says. “I crossed the room and was greeted by President William Price,” then serving as president of the Washington D.C. North Mission.

“Are you the new ward mission leader?” President Price asked him.

“No, I’m the investigator,” Aric said.

“Why aren’t you baptized?” President Price asked.

When Aric replied that he still had two missionary discussions to go, President Price encouraged him to have the sisters present both discussions one right after the other.

Five weeks after his first discussion, Aric was baptized. Six months later, he had an experience that strengthened his resolve to continue preparing himself to enter the temple.

“I was going to pick up a friend at the temple and was frustrated that she could

enter and I couldn’t,” he recalls. “I decided to go for a walk around the temple and wait for her, and as I got close to the temple I felt as if a fog had lifted off of me. My frustration and disappointment began to disappear. I had been influenced by Satan, but he was unable to disturb me as I got closer to the temple. I realized that I would always have the capacity to feel better by going to the temple.”

Blessed By the Temple

On June 6, 2006, a year and a day after his confirmation, Aric entered the temple and received his endowment. “It was one of the most enjoyable experiences I have ever had,” he says. “I was filled with peace and joy.”

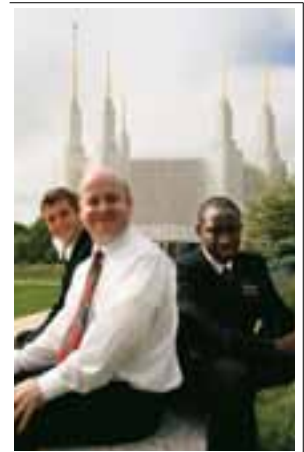
He felt so blessed by the experience that he has returned to the temple as often as possible, performing more than 100 endowments during his second year as a Latter-day Saint.

“When I come to the temple, my joy and happiness are renewed, and I have the opportunity and privilege to help those who can’t help themselves,” says Aric. “The temple regenerates my strength to do good.”

For Aric, doing good includes researching his family history and serving in his ward’s Primary, where he teaches children about the importance of the temple.

“There is an aura about the temple, and it isn’t just because of its beauty,” says Elder F. Melvin Hammond, formerly of the Seventy and recently released president of the Washington D.C. Temple. “A power generates from it, and it falls upon everyone in the area, members and nonmembers alike. The temple changes people and blesses their lives.”

Aric agrees. Joining the Church with the goal of entering the temple, he says, “has been the best decision of my life.” ■



T*he temple regenerates my strength to do good,” says Aric, pictured with Elders Craig S. Holbrook and Theophile T. Hitimana, of the Washington D.C. North Mission.*