

One time a young missionary who had recently arrived at Bogota to serve in our mission said to me in an initial interview: "Well, President, I guess you've heard all about me and about all the trouble I was before receiving my mission call and all the problems I had at the MTC."

I said to him: "No, Elder, I haven't heard a thing and, frankly, unless it concerns a serious moral transgression, I don't want to know. The only thing that matters to me, and I believe that the only thing that matters to the Lord, is what you do from now on. I know that you have been called by God to serve in this mission and that you can be a powerful and effective advocate for the Savior. You have a real opportunity right here and right now to go out and show the Lord and others who you really are and what you can do." I think the missionary was a little surprised at my response, and it effectively terminated our interview.

That young man worked with enthusiasm and energy in some of the areas of our mission that might be considered tough. He taught, he converted, he baptized. He became a district leader and a zone leader. He left our mission with my greatest respect for the work he had done and for the man he had become.

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone

Caring—the motivating force

Benjamin Franklin said, "I think that talents for the education of the youth are the gift of God; and that he on whom they are bestowed, whenever a way is opened for use of them, is as strongly called as if he heard a voice from heaven."

And Elder Harold B. Lee related: "Someone asked [a great opera singer who had a large family] which of her children was her favorite. Her reply revealed the depth of her true moth-

A missionary testimony

Above all the benefits and blessings of missionary service that come into the life of a missionary—and that which brings unparalleled peace and comfort to the soul—is the testimony which comes to him, perhaps not all at once, perhaps line upon line. (See Isaiah 28:13.) That testimony I wish to bear to you now as a returned missionary. I know God lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ, God's Son, the leader of all humanity, and the measure of mankind. He is the King, our Counselor, and our Friend. He is worthy of our most pure and profound adoration and deserving of our very best efforts. As missionaries, we long to serve him with all our heart, mind, and strength. (See D&C 4:2.) In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Dunn.

We shall now hear from Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and he will be followed by Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve.

erhood: "My favorite child is the one who is sick until he gets well or the one who is absent until he returns" (in *Church News*, 13 June 1964, p. 14).

This same great depth of caring ought to be the motivating force behind every bishop and every adviser.

Growing up no picnic

John Sonnenberg, a great Regional Representative, related this experience as a young dentist. They had seven children, all young, and only one

car. When his wife went to town she had to take the bus. One day she and the seven children were waiting for the bus. When the bus stopped, the children and Sister Sonnenberg boarded. She put her token in, and then stood and put one token in the box for each of her seven children. The bus driver was amazed, and he said, "Lady, are these all your children, or is this a picnic?"

She responded, "They are all my children, and it's no picnic!"

In this generation, growing up is no picnic for a young man. It requires stability, high standards, prayer, and parents and Aaronic Priesthood advisers who care.

Henry Eyring's "style"

Henry Eyring, a leading scientist and a great teacher who recently passed away, would have contests with his students. Even in his midsixties he could do a standing broad jump to the top of his desk. He challenged university students to a thirty- or forty-yard foot race.

One day just a few short years before he died, he was in the Church Administration Building. His brother-in-law, President Spencer W. Kimball, came out of his office and saw Henry Eyring standing there with a cane. He said, "Henry, what is the cane for?"

And Henry Eyring said, "Style, President, style."

No wonder he had such an influence on the minds of young men all over the Church. He had "style."

"I was listening"

This past summer at the Nauvoo Aaronic Priesthood Encampment, special missionary preparation workshops were held. Bishops conducted these sessions with their Aaronic Priesthood. Every young man was given his own missionary preparation book. Two thousand young men participated in this activity.

A bishop reported that one young man would not get involved. He lazed on the grass a few feet from the group.

He would occasionally laugh or seem to make fun. He would not participate, as he had no intention of serving a mission. Around a campfire that night, during a testimony meeting, this young man stood up and began to talk. He said, "This morning I did not participate in the missionary preparation workshops, but I was listening, I was listening. I have been thinking, thinking a lot." Then, with great emotion he said, "I have made a decision to go on a mission."

"What do I need to do?"

A year ago at Flagstaff, Arizona, a special banquet for Eagle Scouts was held. There were 1,150 Eagle Scouts. John Warnick, the director of Mormon Relationships, invited all those who would commit to go on a mission to stand. All 1,150 stood.

Later, one of the young men, a Catholic boy, went to the bishop and said, "I am not a Mormon, and I committed to go on a mission. What do I need to do?"

The bishop said, "Let's talk to your parents." During the visit with the family, it was decided that the family should hear the discussions. The family, including the Eagle Scout, are all members of the Church now.

Eyes open and a prayer in your heart

A ward Mutual was having a swimming party. The bishopric attended, dressed in suits. Many of the youth had already been in swimming. Everything stopped while a great old high priest gave an opening prayer. During the prayer there was a splashing in the pool. The counselor in the bishopric said: "I think I have always been practical enough, so I opened one eye to see who it was that was so irreverent as to swim during the prayer. A twelve-year-old Spanish boy, who could not swim, had somehow gotten into the deep end of the pool and was drowning. His eyes reflected fear and terror. I took

two steps, dove into the pool, suit, shoes and all, pulled the young man to the side and helped him out. He sat on the edge of the pool and I waited in the pool. The good old high priest prayed on and on."

The counselor continued, "I think the young man would have drowned if we had waited for the prayer to end to save him." Then he concluded by saying, "I think we have to keep an eye open and be ready to do whatever is necessary to save our youth. And by the way, the bishop never did open his eyes, even when I dove in."

Bishops, keep your eyes open, with a constant prayer in your heart that the Lord will let you know when your youth are in trouble.

A salesman approached a door. Inside, a young man was dutifully, dully practicing the piano. The salesman said, "Young man, is your mother home?"

The boy replied, "What do you think?"

As this mother monitored her son's practicing, we give thanks to the great men who dutifully monitor, care for, and love the youth.

Commit to pray

Some years back, Terry, a deacon, was at Tracy Wigwam on an overnight camp. That night a full moon hung overhead. The adviser took Terry by the arm and said, "Let's go for a walk." They went several hundred feet from the cabins. The adviser said, "Terry, let's kneel here and have a prayer." They knelt together and prayed. After the prayer Terry's adviser said to him, "Terry, do you pray?" Terry answered that he did not. "Terry, will you commit to pray every day all the rest of your life?"

Terry said, "I never made a commitment unless I intended to keep it." He thought about prayer and decided it was right. It was a good thing. He said to his adviser, "Yes, I will pray all the rest of my life."

Terry, who went on to high school, then quarterbacked for the University of Utah where he was all-conference, and went on to play for the Pittsburgh Steelers, said, "I have kept that commitment, and I have prayed every morning and night since that day." And Terry is here tonight.

Harness the energies of love

One of the most Christlike acts any leader can perform is to go out after the sheep. Elder Harold B. Lee said, "One's love is measured by how much he gives, not how much he gets." (Excerpts from an address by Elder Harold B. Lee at the Venturer-Explorer Department, pamphlet, 1968, n.p.)

A French scientist, Rene de Chardan, said, "Some day after we have mastered the winds and the waves, the tides and gravity, we will harness for God the energies of love, and then for the second time in the history of the world men will have discovered fire." Such is the love of a great man in my life, Bruford Reynolds.

Bruford Reynolds believed in me

When I was a boy of eleven, I used to go over to the old Richards Ward every Tuesday night. The Scouts would be having their troop meeting. I would lie on the ground and watch through the basement window. The Scouts would have patrol contests, build a fire using flint and steel, practice first aid, drill, and play games. I could hardly wait to become a deacon and a Scout.

When I was ordained a deacon I also registered in Scouting. Bruford Reynolds was the deacons quorum adviser for a period of time and also was the Scoutmaster.

Two months after I joined the troop I went to Brother Reynolds's home to pass off the Second Class requirements. When I had done this, Bruford Reynolds said to me: "Vaughn, you have a lot of leadership ability, but we cannot use you because you are

rowdy in troop meeting. When you get squared away, we need you."

Having come from a large inactive family that was poor, I had little personal attention. My father had never told me that I could be anything. I gave a great deal of thought to my conduct. I decided to change. The following Tuesday I hardly moved an eyeball. I was as near perfect as I knew how to be.

Bruford Reynolds was true to his word. I became an assistant patrol leader, a patrol leader, assistant senior patrol leader, then senior patrol leader. He believed in me and had a profound impact on my life.

"He will lead in high places in the Church"

About five years ago I called Bruford Reynolds on the phone. He was bishop at the time. I said, "May I be invited to speak at your sacrament meeting sometime in the near future?"

He said, "We are not supposed to ask General Authorities."

"You aren't," I said. "I am asking you."

He then said, "I would love to have you come on Easter." So I prepared a talk on the Savior's life.

When I began to speak, I first told the people in his ward what a wonderful man their bishop had been in my life. I told them how I used to go over and lie down on the ground and watch through the window. I shared with them examples of great lessons he taught me. I told them of the influence he had on my life and how he had told me I had leadership abilities. Then I shared with them how much I loved him. After brief comments about the bishop, I then spoke about the Savior.

At the conclusion of my talk, Bishop Reynolds stood. "We are not supposed to speak after General Authorities," he said, "but I want to share this additional part of the story that Elder Featherstone does not know.

"During part of the time I was deacons adviser and Scoutmaster, I also served another youth group. Both

groups met on Tuesday, the Scouts at 7:30 and the other group at 8:00. I would get Scout meeting started and then I would leave to go over to the Lincoln Ward where the second group met. At 8:30 I would return to conclude the last half hour of Scout meeting. Elder Featherstone was my senior patrol leader, and I would leave him in charge of the troop. He isn't the only one who has lain on the ground and watched through the basement window! I used to do that when I would come back from Lincoln Ward. I wanted to see what was going on.

"One night I had a problem and could not make it back to the Scout troop until just before 9:00 P.M. I did not stop to look in the window, but just hurried down the hall to the Scout room. You can learn a lot about what is going on in a youth meeting by listening at the door. I listened at the door. Elder Featherstone had called the troop together for a Scoutmaster's Minute. I could hear what was being said.

"All of a sudden I heard footsteps behind me. I looked back, and here were four district commissioners from the Boy Scouts who had come to visit our troop. I wondered what they thought when they saw the Scoutmaster standing outside the Scout room, listening at the door. I didn't know what to say, so I put my finger to my lips in a hushing signal, and then I motioned them to listen at the door. They all leaned over and listened. In a minute one of the men said, 'That boy will be a fine leader out in the world some day.'"

And Bru Reynolds said, "No, one day he will lead in high places in this Church."

What life is all about

Two years ago we decided to have a reunion and honor Bruford Reynolds and other youth leaders who led us in Richards Ward between 1940 and 1950. The chapel was completely filled with men, former boys who had lived in the ward. We had raised money to

buy some very nice gifts, which were presented to them, and using an opaque projector, we showed pictures of the boys and some of the activities during those years. We made a real fuss over Bruford Reynolds and the other great men.

Then we called for a response. Bruford Reynolds stood up, and with great tears dimming his eyes he said, "I think this is the greatest day of my life." As I thought about that statement, I looked out across that group of deacons/Scouts grown tall. It included three men who had been stake presidents, two men who had been mission presidents, several men in stake presidencies, thirty-three men who had been bishops or counselors, and one who is a General Authority. Then I thought, maybe this is what life is all about, to be able to look back and see the young men you had influenced grow up and become leaders in the kingdom.

Love and farewell between a great adviser and a boy

A short time after that reunion, young Bruford Reynolds, a son, who was also a bishop, called and said, "Did you know my dad is in the hospital? He had a serious heart attack. He is in the LDS Hospital, and we wondered if you knew." I had not known. I told him that I would like to see him but I had to catch a plane in a little over an hour. I didn't see how I could get up to the hospital before I had to leave. He then said, "Oh, that's okay. Dad is going to be released tomorrow to return home."

I said, "Tell him I love him, and I'll drop in to see him as soon as I get back."

I hung up the phone, thought for only a moment, and decided everything else could wait. I took my briefcase, airplane tickets, and drove to the LDS Hospital to see Bruford Reynolds. As I walked through the door, our eyes met. The love between a great man and boy spanned the years. I went over to him and sat down, and we talked. Then I said, "I know you have been adminis-

tered to, but would you feel all right if I knelt by your bed and offered a prayer?" I knelt down and together we prayed. When I finished, my eyes were filled with tears, as were his. Then I bent down over him and kissed him on the forehead and left.

Bruford Reynolds died an hour later. I was one of his boys, saying "farewell" to a great adviser one last time.

Watchmen and torchbearers

My testimony to all of you wonderful brethren who preside over and lead the Aaronic Priesthood is that you are more important to the Church than you would ever dare to suppose.

In Isaiah, the prophet asks, "Watchman, what of the night?" (Isaiah 21:11). This generation of youth will be the torchbearers in the future, possibly in the darkest period of the world. So remember, brethren:

The God of the great endeavor gave me a torch to bear.

I lifted it high above me in the dark and murky air.

Straightway with loud hosannas the crowd acclaimed its light,

And followed me as I carried my torch through the dark and starless night.

Til mad with peoples' praises and drunken with vanity,

I forgot it was the torch that drew them and fancied they followed me.

And my arm grew sore and weary upholding the shining load,

And my tired feet went stumbling over the hilly road.

I fell with the torch beneath me, in a moment the flame was out.

But lo, from the throng a stripling sprang forth with a mighty shout,

Caught up the torch as it smoldered and lifted it high again,

Til fanned by the winds of heaven it fired the souls of men.

As I lay alone in the darkness, the feet of the trampling crowd,

Passed over and far beyond me, their praises proclaimed aloud.

And I learned in the deepening shadow this glorious verity,
 'Tis the torch the people follow, who ere the bearer be.

("The Torchbearer," anonymous.)

A great truth. They *will* be the torchbearers. May we be the watch-

men. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Featherstone.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder David B. Haight

I rejoice with each of you priesthood holders, assembled in hundreds of meetinghouses throughout the world, in the knowledge that what is said here tonight is in harmony with and will assist in hastening the fulfillment of ancient and modern prophecy of our Lord and Savior's plan "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

We have a great work entrusted to us. My remarks tonight are centered in our efforts to find and recover men and families who have strayed from active Church participation. The dedicated heart and willing mind of every man and boy listening tonight is required to be vigorously involved in his priesthood responsibility to bring into activity and fellowship those men and boys we classify as inactive, thereby moving mankind nearer to the ultimate peace and joy of eternal life.

Two young men took different paths

During this past month I received two widely differing messages. One was a formal invitation to attend the swearing-in ceremony in Washington, D. C., of the newest and youngest member of the United States Tax Court—an appointment made by the President of the United States, and a very prestigious honor.

Within hours of receiving that invitation, I had a visit from a law en-

forcement officer inquiring if I knew a certain young man. I replied, "Of course I know him. Why do you ask?" This young man had indicated to the officer that he knew me. A sordid story was then related to me of drugs, immorality, stealing to satisfy the high cost of drugs, buying illicit sexual favors, and cheap rooming house living. When I expressed a desire to see and help this young man, the officer suggested I not see him at this time because of his emotional condition.

The families of these two young men are well known to me. As boys they were members of the same ward. Both received the Aaronic Priesthood and had had the same Sunday School teachers. The scriptures, Church magazines, and lesson manuals had been made available in their homes.

One received the Melchizedek Priesthood, fulfilled a mission, married in the temple, and while attending law school served in a bishopric; and now, Judge Stephen Jensen Swift has been honored by his national government by appointment to a federal judgeship.

The other young man never merited or obtained the promised blessings of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Going to top-rated private schools overshadowed interest in a mission. He never married, associated with the wrong people, has now become a ridiculer of gospel principles because they differ from his life-style, and is virtually an outcast from family,