

and even by some members who think that the Latin expression *vox populi, vox Dei* can be literally interpreted in the Church as "the voice of the people is the voice of God." The commercial slogan "Have it your way" certainly does not apply in God's plan for the salvation of his children when we read that the very cause of apostasy is when "every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god" (D&C 1:16). How do you overcome the temptation to have it your own way, to satisfy your own appetites, and to follow the world's trends?

One of my simple answers tonight is to constantly remember your covenants,

to act on them, and to commit to them. This sequence, as repeatedly stated in the scriptures, is a classic, spiritual teaching pattern to prepare us for eternal life. It is centered upon Christ and his doctrine and teachings. I will remember them forever.

I testify that Jesus lives, that this is the only true church, that the priesthood of the Son of God is vested herein, and that prophets, seers, and revelators who preside over this church are appointed to preserve the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ and the authority of his priesthood for the salvation of his people. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Richard P. Lindsay

Elder Wirthlin, I was at that football game and spent ten cents to watch that great run. But I forgive you for not tackling Whizzer White.

Gratitude for Aaronic Priesthood leaders

Along with Elder Wirthlin, I should like to speak tonight to the great army of young Aaronic Priesthood bearers and especially to those who are called in these challenging times by divine revelation to be their priesthood leaders. I have had a lifelong feeling of deep gratitude to the Aaronic Priesthood leaders who blessed my early life in ways I will never be able to repay. These good men helped fill the void in my life after my father, who had served nearly all his married life as our ward's bishop, was taken by a sudden illness when I was five years old.

Some years later in 1940 as a ward deacons quorum president, I received a letter from the Presiding Bishopric of the Church, signed by LeGrand Richards, Marvin O. Ashton, and Joseph L. Wirthlin. This letter said in part, "The Presid-

ing Bishopric of the Church extends to the Presidency of the Taylorsville Ward deacons quorum congratulations and best wishes on achieving more than 90% attendance in priesthood and sacrament meeting for the year 1939." Can you imagine, brethren, the impact of this letter on the Aaronic Priesthood bearers of our rural ward and especially the three thirteen-year-old deacons who composed the quorum presidency? From that moment on, these men of the Presiding Bishopric became my instant heroes.

Faithful deacons quorum adviser

In more mature reflection on that event, I realize that this letter was largely the result of a faithful, conscientious ward bishopric whose second counselor, assigned to the deacons quorum, frequently sat in council with us in our weekly quorum presidency planning meeting. He was *always* present for at least a portion of our weekly quorum meeting. Our quorum adviser was the kind of humble leader I envision the Savior trying to help Peter become as

He admonished the soon-to-be prophet-leader of the Church, "Peter, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (see Luke 22:32).

As we sat each Sunday morning in the dimly lit basement room of a nineteenth-century-built chapel, this great deacons quorum adviser poured out his heart to his young flock of eager youth. With pure love and plain words he told us of the folly of using harmful substances revealed by the Lord in the Word of Wisdom. He emphasized the need for us to be clean in body and mind in our personal lives and to be worthy to serve the Lord in the mission field. I remember that at appropriate times, with tears in his eyes, he would bear his humble testimony to the members of the deacons quorum of the divinity of the Savior and the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith.

He taught us faithfully that we were our brothers' keepers and that the purpose of the quorum was to bless each member's life. He emphasized that when we passed the sacrament or collected fast offerings or cut wood for widows living in the ward, we were doing just what the Lord would have us do. When one member of our quorum from a less-active family suffered a prolonged illness and could not attend priesthood meetings, we would go to his home, and he would there receive the weekly priesthood lesson and the fellowship of quorum members. When another less-active member, whose single parent was not a member of the Church, failed to attend, priesthood sessions were held in his home as well. Both of these young men in more recent years have blessed countless Church members as they have been called to positions of major responsibility.

Many years later I stood at the hospital bedside of this dear quorum adviser as he was about to exchange this life for eternity. Despite considerable

personal suffering, he wanted to use that brief time to have me review with him the current circumstances of each of those deacons who had belonged to that favored quorum more than thirty years earlier.

His life literally fulfilled the instruction of the Savior to Peter on the shores of the Sea of Tiberias in his final admonition to the Apostles: "Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17).

The battle for the Lord's sheep

The battle for the souls of our Heavenly Father's precious sheep and lambs is raging in every corner of the world.

An increasingly permissive culture, so heavily influenced by the media, especially television, has caused us all, and especially our youth, to be subjected to a moral wasteland of values. Television in America in most instances has almost single-handedly removed vulgarity from modern culture by making it the "norm." The result is a mass culture driven by profiteers who exploit the hunger for vulgarity, pornography, and even barbarism. Such influences cannot help but have a demoralizing effect on the religious faith and belief of our great young people.

Reach out to young men

Such is the condition envisioned by Bible and Book of Mormon prophets. And such is the world in which the faithful bearers of the Aaronic Priesthood in our time must live and emerge valiant and victorious. Against this worldly backdrop, leaders of Aaronic Priesthood must reach out, with love, to help each young man to—

- Become truly converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ and live by its teachings;
- Magnify his priesthood callings;
- Give meaningful service;

- Prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood;
- Commit to, worthily prepare for, and serve an honorable mission;
- Live worthy to receive temple covenants and prepare to become a worthy husband and father.

Brethren, make sure that the love and fellowship of the priesthood reaches out to each young man in your quorum and that each one is included and friendshipped.

The lesson of the lambs

Since recently returning from a three-year Church assignment in Africa and becoming reacquainted with our twenty-three grandchildren, Sister Lindsay and I have often been requested on such visits to tell these grandchildren a bedtime story that is, first, true; second, exciting; and third, one they have never heard before. All you grandpas here tonight can understand the challenge which such a request represents. One such true story did come to my mind, however, as we visited recently in the home of a son and his wife who live in a midwestern city with their five children, including three bearers of the Aaronic Priesthood—a priest, a teacher, and a deacon. This story concerned their own father when he was a six-year-old boy.

I grew up in rural Salt Lake County when it was an economic necessity to care for a variety of barnyard animals. My favorite animals were sheep—prompted perhaps by the fact that sheep do not require being milked twice a day, seven days a week.

I wanted our own sons to have the blessing of being shepherds to such farm animals. Our older sons were each provided with a ewe to teach them the responsibility of caring for these sheep and the lambs that would hopefully follow.

Our second son, newly turned six years of age, called me excitedly at my office one cold March morning on the

phone and said, “Daddy, guess what? Esther [Esther was his mother ewe]—Esther has just had two baby lambs. Please come home and help me take care of them.” I instructed Gordon to watch the lambs carefully and make sure they received the mother’s milk and they would be fine. I was interrupted by a second phone call later in the morning with the same little voice on the other end saying, “Daddy, these lambs aren’t doing very well. They haven’t been able to get milk from the mother, and they are very cold. Please come home.”

My response likely reflected some of the distress I felt by being distracted from my busy work schedule. I responded, “Gordon, the lambs will be all right. You just watch them, and when Daddy comes home we will make sure they get mother’s milk and everything will be fine.” Again, later in the afternoon I received a third, more urgent call. Now the voice on the other end was pleading. “Daddy, you’ve got to come home now. Those lambs are lying down, and one of them looks very cold.” Despite work pressures, I now felt some real concern and tried to reassure the six-year-old owner of the mother sheep by saying, “Gordon, bring the lambs into the house. Rub them with a gunnysack to make them warm. When Daddy comes home in a little while, we will milk the mother, feed the lambs, and they will be fine.”

Two hours later I drove into the driveway of our home and was met by a boy with tear-stained eyes, carrying a dead lamb in his arms. His grief was overwhelming. Now I tried to make amends by quickly milking the mother sheep and trying to force the milk from a bottle down the throat of the now weak, surviving lamb. At this point, Gordon walked out of the room and came back with a hopeful look in his eyes. He said, “Daddy, I’ve prayed that

we will be able to save this lamb, and I feel it will be all right.”

The sad note to this story, brethren, is that within a few minutes the second lamb was dead. Then with a look that I will remember forever, this little six-year-old boy who had lost both of his lambs looked up into his father’s face and with tears running down his cheeks said, “Daddy, if you had come home when I first called you, we could have saved them both.”

Be with the lambs when needed

Dear brethren of the priesthood, those who are entrusted as keepers of the Lord’s precious flock—we must be there with the lambs when we are needed. We must teach with love, principles of faith, and goodness and be righteous examples to the lambs of our Heavenly Father. Each quorum member must be prepared for his future role as a bearer of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood in

a world plagued with sin and desperate for decisive moral leadership.

I leave my witness that this is God’s work. It is the most important work in all the world in which we can be engaged. That we will be instruments in His hands in saving the precious lambs for which He gave His life, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We’ve just listened to Elders Charles Didier and Richard P. Lindsay of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing “Oh Say, What Is Truth?” We shall then hear from Elder Marlin K. Jensen of the Seventy, who is currently presiding as president of the New York Rochester Mission.

The choir and congregation sang “Oh Say, What Is Truth?”

Elder Marlin K. Jensen

Brethren, I am grateful to be a part of this vast assembly of priesthood bearers. I am also especially mindful of a wonderful little band of missionaries with which my wife and I are currently blessed to labor in the New York Rochester Mission. Speaking perhaps for all mission presidents and the missionaries’ parents, I wish to say during my temporary absence from them, “Please work hard, drive carefully, and be good!”

The power of a good life

All of us who hold the priesthood of God are involved in a glorious common cause—helping our Father in Heaven bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man (see Moses 1:39). This task, in its simplest form, involves qualifying ourselves for the blessings of the Savior’s

atonement and helping others to do the same.

Over the years as I have struggled with my own weaknesses and have tried in my way to help others overcome theirs, I have received assistance and motivation from a variety of sources. Personal prayer, my knowledge of an interested, loving Father in Heaven and His plan of salvation, the scriptures, the temple, and the promptings of the Holy Ghost have been especially helpful. However, even more immediate than these in some ways have been the influence and inspiration provided by the lives of noble people. I am ever impressed and deeply moved by the power of even one good life.

From among many exemplary lives in our rich history as a people, I wish to share examples from just two. The first