

take it. She said presciently, “I feel if you go there, maybe you will have some influence on students.” I replied impatiently, “I’ll be typing news releases, not working with students.” The subsequent opportunities included being a bishop of a student ward, dean of students, and teaching hundreds of fine students in political science. It wasn’t status that mattered, of course, but being stretched and being given opportunities to serve.

Our wives are often inspired but sometimes in counterintuitive ways—a reality, young men, which your fathers may be brave enough to explain to you sometime.

It’s interesting, too, how we create, cumulatively, expectations in the lives of our grandchildren even when we are not aware of it. Some years ago, when our grandson Robbie was about five, we dropped by to see his family in Orem. He was asleep upstairs, and his mother called, “Robbie, Grandpa Neal is here!” A tired little voice floated downstairs saying, “Shall I bring my scriptures?”

Of course he was too young to read them, but he carried them, as so many do in the Church today in that fine new pattern!

Brethren, there are clusters of memories embedded in each of your lives. And these can help us to “remember how merciful the Lord hath been” (Moroni 10:3). He certainly has been to me!

### Submitting our wills to God

Brethren, as you submit your wills to God, you are giving Him the *only* thing you *can* actually give Him that is really yours to give. Don’t wait too long to find the altar or to begin to place the gift of your wills upon it! No need to wait for a receipt; the Lord has His own special ways of acknowledging.

I testify to you that God has known you individually, brethren, for a long, long time (see D&C 93:23). He has loved you for a long, long time. He not only knows the names of all the stars (see Psalm 147:4; Isaiah 40:26), He knows your names and all your heartaches and your joys! By the way, you have never seen an immortal star; they finally expire. But seated by you tonight are immortal individuals—imperfect but who are, nevertheless, “trying to be like Jesus”! In His name, even Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Mervyn B. Arnold

### A persistent leader activates a young man

Brother José de Souza Marques was the type of leader who truly understood the principle taught by the Savior: “And if any man among you be strong in the Spirit, let him take with him him that is weak, that he may be edified in all meekness, that he may become strong also” (D&C 84:106).

As a member of the branch presidency in Fortaleza, Brazil, Brother Marques, with the other priesthood leaders, developed a plan to reactivate those who were less active in his branch. One of those

who was less active was a young man by the name of Fernando Araujo. Recently I spoke to Fernando, and he told me of his experience:

“I became involved in surfing competitions on Sunday mornings and stopped going to my Church meetings. One Sunday morning, Brother Marques knocked on my door and asked my nonmember mother if he could talk to me. When she told him I was sleeping, he asked permission to wake me. He said to me, ‘Fernando, you are late for church!’ Not listening to my excuses, he took me to church.

“The next Sunday the same thing happened, so on the third Sunday I decided to leave early to avoid him. As I opened the gate I found him sitting on his car, reading the scriptures. When he saw me he said, ‘Good! You are up early. Today we will go and find another young man!’ I appealed to my agency, but he said, ‘We can talk about that later.’

“After eight Sundays I could not get rid of him, so I decided to sleep at a friend’s house. I was at the beach the next morning when I saw a man dressed in a suit and tie walking toward me. When I saw that it was Brother Marques, I ran into the water. All of a sudden I felt someone’s hand on my shoulder. It was Brother Marques, in water up to his chest! He took me by the hand and said, ‘You are late! Let’s go.’ When I argued that I didn’t have any clothes to wear, he replied, ‘They are in the car.’

“That day as we walked out of the ocean, I was touched by Brother Marques’s sincere love and worry for me. He truly understood the Savior’s words: ‘I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick’ (Ezekiel 34:16). Brother Marques didn’t just give me a ride to church—the quorum made sure I remained active. They planned activities that made me feel needed and wanted, I received a calling, and the quorum members became my friends.”

Following his reactivation, Brother Araujo went on a full-time mission and has served as bishop, stake president, mission president, and regional representative. His widowed mother, three sisters, and several cousins have also entered the waters of baptism.

### **Rescue work is the focus in quorums**

When speaking about the work of the Aaronic Priesthood quorums in his ward,

Brother Araujo, who is once again serving as a bishop, stated:

“Our rescue work is the focus in all three quorums of the Aaronic Priesthood. We have a list of each one of our lost sheep. The quorum presidencies, advisers, and bishopric divide up and go visit them on a regular basis. We visit not only the less-active members, but we also visit the nonmembers in less-active or part-member families.

“Activities are organized to reach each young man. We discuss each young man in our quorum presidency meetings and in our monthly bishopric youth committee meetings. In 2003 we managed to rescue five priests, one teacher, and two deacons, who are now active in their quorums. We have also reactivated some families and have enjoyed the blessing of seeing some nonmembers enter the waters of baptism.”

As I reflected on the desire of these priesthood brethren to fulfill their sacred duties, spending the bulk of their time ministering instead of administering, these words of the Savior came into my mind:

“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

“Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Matthew 25:35–36).

### **Jesus’s example in finding the lost sheep**

The Savior’s example of going the extra mile to find His lost sheep is evident throughout the scriptures. “What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine and go into the wilderness after that which is lost, until he find it?” (Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 15:4). The Good Shepherd knew when one of His sheep was missing: “He numbereth his sheep, and they know him” (1 Nephi 22:25), “and he calleth his own sheep by name” (John

10:3). He went “into the wilderness,” which at times has been defined as “a confusing multitude or mass” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. [2003], “wilderness,” 1432), and He searched for that which was lost.

We are not told how long it took the Good Shepherd to find the lost sheep or if others helped in the search, but we do know that “they [knew] his voice” (John 10:4) and that He loved them. We also know that *He did not give up*, that He did “go . . . after that which [was] lost, until he [did] find it” (Luke 15:4), and that when *He returned*, the lost sheep was safely on His shoulders. And then He exclaims: “Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:6–7).

### To the shepherds of Israel

In Ezekiel chapter 34 we read the prophet’s warning voice:

“And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, . . .

“ . . . Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? . . .

“My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. . . .

“As I live, saith the Lord God, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock . . . ;

“ . . . *I will require my flock at their hand*” (verses 1–2, 6, 8, 10; italics added).

The Lord has always required that those He entrusts with His holy priesthood, including fathers, quorum leaders, and

quorum members, be held accountable for His flocks. Brethren, we must search and seek out our flocks, and we must not allow our flocks to become “meat to every beast of the field.”

In section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Savior teaches us many of our duties as priesthood holders and quorum members. The following action words and phrases underline His sense of urgency: “watch over,” “take the lead,” “expound,” “visit the house of each member,” “pray,” “strengthen,” “warn,” “send,” “teach,” “exhort,” “baptize,” and “*invite all to come unto Christ*” (verses 42, 44, 46–47, 53, 59, 81–82; italics added).

I also felt the urgency in President Hinckley’s voice when he stated, “Let us, every one, resolve within ourselves to arise to a new opportunity, a new sense of responsibility, a new shouldering of obligation to assist our Father in Heaven in His glorious work of bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of His sons and daughters throughout the earth” (“Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 110).

### Examples of good shepherds

I am grateful for the example of the Good Shepherd, who did not give up until He had His lost sheep safely home; for the examples of President Thomas S. Monson, who while serving as a bishop left his flock in the care of the adviser and went to the West Temple Garage to rescue Richard from a grease pit (see Conference Report, Oct. 1984, 56; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 43); of Brother Marques, who rescued Fernando from the ocean; of a quorum adviser and various quorum members I am well acquainted with who knocked on Scott’s bedroom window every Sunday morning for six months, fellowshipped and loved him, until Scott returned to the fold; and

for the examples of many of you who have gone the extra mile until you have found that which was lost.

Your efforts will have an eternal effect on the lives of your quorum members and their posterity for generations to come. They will be living testimonies of the promise given by the Savior when He said: “Feed the flock of God which is among you, . . . and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:2, 4), “that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father” (D&C 15:6), and “how great will be your joy” (D&C 18:16).

## Elder Earl C. Tingey

### Things as they really are

My dear brethren of the priesthood, how honored I am to be with you this evening. Four of my grandsons are in the Conference Center tonight—Craig, Brent, Kendall, and Michael. I would like to speak to them and all Aaronic Priesthood bearers and invite others to listen.

In a message from the First Presidency, included in the *For the Strength of Youth* booklet, we read:

“Our beloved young men . . . , we have great confidence in you. You are choice spirits who have come forth in this day when the responsibilities and opportunities, as well as the temptations, are the greatest. You are at the beginning of your journey through this mortal life. Your Heavenly Father wants your life to be joyful and to lead you back into His presence. The decisions you make now will determine much of what will follow during your life and throughout eternity.”<sup>1</sup>

You live in a world of great uncertainty. There are many voices. There are many paths. Not all lead to our Heavenly Father. How will you know to whom to listen or where to go?

### Strengthen those who are weak

May each quorum and each one of us individually, working in conjunction with the councils of the Church, follow the example of our Lord and Savior to “take . . . him that is weak, . . . that he may become strong also” (D&C 84:106).

I bear humble witness that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, that the Book of Mormon is scripture, that President Gordon B. Hinckley is indeed a prophet of God, that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer and the Good Shepherd, and that He lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The prophet Jacob answered these questions in the following scripture: “The Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be.”<sup>2</sup>

But what are “things as they really are” as referred to by Jacob? Elder Neal A. Maxwell, addressing this subject, has said:

“Without the obedient response to ‘things as they really are,’ there are the endless detours and the empty searches for another course of life. . . . A course of life that is wrong now cannot and will not be proven right later on.”

“The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ gives us many truths . . . —that there really is the living God; there really is the living Church; there really are living prophets; there really are living scriptures; and there really will be a resurrection with a judgment.”<sup>3</sup>

### Standards and truths

There are certain truths, certain “things as they really are,” that are enforced by standards—many of which can be mea-