

sincere desire to always be found in His service. It is President Monson who is the Lord's mouthpiece and whose counsel and direction we are admonished to follow. In a very real sense, the Master speaks to us through His prophet. I know, and have recorded in meetings of the Brethren assembled, this to be true.

“His servants the prophets”

As one who has been taught at the feet of living prophets and of these latter-day witnesses whom I have known and love, I testify in all truthfulness, as members of this Church heed the words and commandments the Lord gave to the prophets of the testaments and followed by the Lord's prophet even today, we will more fully understand that “surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.”¹³

Of these truths and that God is in the heavens, that Jesus is the Christ, and of this The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which has prophets, seers, and revelators to guide us, I bear solemn witness in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Acts 8:30–31.
2. Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 1:18.
4. Psalm 24:3–5.
5. Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 152; or *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1970, 126.
6. Harold B. Lee, Christmas devotional for employees of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Dec. 13, 1973; in *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1996), 298.
7. Luke 22:42; see Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (1972), 100.
8. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 4:461.
9. 3 Nephi 15:9.
10. Quoted in Jay M. Todd, “President Howard W. Hunter: Fourteenth President of the Church,” *Ensign*, July 1994, 4–5.
11. Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 73; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 50.
12. *History of the Church*, 3:395; for further information on this epistle, see Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation* (1950), 48–49.
13. Amos 3:7.

Elder L. Tom Perry

A lost sheep

Many years ago I was driving along University Avenue near the mouth of Provo Canyon when I saw ahead of me the traffic slowing down. Up ahead there were police cars with their lights flashing, a fire truck, and several search and rescue vehicles all huddled together, blocking the road into Provo Canyon. At first I was annoyed, since it seemed like we might be there for a long time. I was also curious—what was causing all the commotion?

As I looked up the rock face along the east side of the entrance to Provo Canyon,

I saw some men climbing. I assumed they were the search and rescue people. What were they climbing to? Eventually I saw it. Somehow a ewe, a lost sheep, had made her way about 25 feet up the rock face, and she was stranded there. She was not a mountain goat or mountain sheep, just a white ewe separated from a shepherd's flock.

As I had nothing else to do, I searched the rock face for a way up to where the ewe stood. I could not for the life of me figure out how she ever got there. Nevertheless, she was there, and all the commotion in front of me was focused on her rescue. To

this day, I don't know the end of the story, since the police figured out a way to get the traffic moving again.

As I drove away, a concern bothered me. While the search and rescue personnel were certainly well intentioned, how would the ewe react to them? I'm sure they had a plan for how they would calm her—perhaps they would shoot her with a tranquilizer dart from a close distance so they could catch her before she fell. Knowing nothing of their plan but knowing a little about how animals react to being cornered by strangers, I worried about the feasibility of their rescue effort. And then I wondered, "Where is the shepherd?" Certainly he would have the best chance of approaching the ewe without alarming her. The shepherd's calming voice and helping hand were what the situation needed, but he seemed to be missing in action.

Importance of member missionaries

As members of the Church, sometimes we seem to be missing in action, just like this shepherd. Consider for a moment what President Monson told the newly called mission presidents at the 2008 seminar for new mission presidents. He said: "There is . . . no substitute for a member-oriented proselyting program. Tracting will not substitute for it. Golden questions will not substitute for it. A member-oriented program is the key to success, and it works wherever we try it" ("Motivating Missionaries," June 22, 2008, 8).

Viewed in this light, member missionaries—both you and I—are the shepherds, and the full-time missionaries, like the search and rescue team, are trying to do something almost impossible for them to do alone. Certainly the full-time missionaries will continue to do the best they can, but wouldn't it be better if you and I stepped up to do a job that is rightfully ours and for which we are better suited

since we know personally those who are lost and need to be rescued?

I would like to focus on three objectives for members of the Church found in the Doctrine and Covenants. Each of these encourages us not to be missing in action when friends, neighbors, and family members need our help. This should include those who have fallen away, the less active. All of us should be better member missionaries.

We must warn our neighbors

In section 88, verse 81 of the Doctrine and Covenants, we read, "And it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor." I have had the privilege of traveling to many of the stakes of the Church to encourage the growth and development of ward missions. It has been a very rewarding and spiritual experience for me. I have discovered in these travels, and a recent survey has confirmed the fact, that over one-half of the people in the United States and Canada have little or no awareness of our practices and beliefs. I am certain the percentage would be much larger in other parts of the world. This same survey also showed that when non-members interact with faithful members of the Church over an extended period of time or are exposed to clear and accurate information regarding Church beliefs and doctrines, their attitudes become positive and open.

The Church has over 50,000 full-time missionaries serving around the world. *Preach My Gospel* has helped make them the best teachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ we have ever had in the history of the Church. Unfortunately most of our full-time missionaries spend more of their time trying to find people rather than teaching them. I view our full-time missionaries as an underutilized teaching resource. If you and I did more of the finding for the full-time missionaries and freed

them up to spend more time teaching the people we find, great things would begin to happen. We're missing a golden opportunity to grow the Church when we wait for our full-time missionaries to warn our neighbors instead of doing it ourselves.

It should be "with great earnestness" (D&C 123:14) that we bring the light of the gospel to those who are searching for answers the plan of salvation has to offer. Many are concerned for their families. Some are looking for security in a world of changing values. Our opportunity is to give them hope and courage and to invite them to come with us and join those who embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord's gospel is on earth and will bless their lives here and in the eternities to come.

The gospel is centered on the Atonement of our Lord and Savior. The Atonement provides the power to wash away sins, to heal, and to grant eternal life. All the imponderable blessings of the Atonement can be given only to those who live the principles and receive the ordinances of the gospel—faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end. Our great missionary message to the world is that all mankind is invited to be rescued and to enter the fold of the Good Shepherd, even Jesus Christ.

Our missionary message is strengthened by the knowledge of the Restoration. We know that God speaks to His prophets today, just as He did anciently. We also know that His gospel is administered with the power and authority of the restored priesthood. No other message has such great, eternal significance to everyone living on the earth today. All of us need to teach this message to others with power and conviction. It is the still, small voice of the Holy Ghost that testifies through us of the miracle of the Restoration, but first we must open our mouths and testify. We must warn our neighbors.

We must open our mouths

This leads me to the second scripture I want to share with you from the Doctrine and Covenants. While verse 81 of section 88 teaches us that missionary work becomes the responsibility of each of us as soon as we have been warned, verses 7–10 of section 33 teach us to open our mouths.

Verse 7 leaves no doubt in anyone's mind who has memorized section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants that the Lord is talking to us about missionary work: "Yea, verily, verily, I say unto you, that the field is white already to harvest; wherefore, thrust in your sickles, and reap with all your might, mind, and strength."

Then comes the injunction—three times—to open our mouths:

"Open your mouths and they shall be filled, and you shall become even as Nephi of old, who journeyed from Jerusalem in the wilderness.

"Yea, open your mouths and spare not, and you shall be laden with sheaves upon your backs, for lo, I am with you.

"Yea, open your mouths and they shall be filled, saying: Repent, repent, and prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (verses 8–10).

What would each of us say if we had to open our mouth three times? If I may, I would like to offer a suggestion. First and foremost, we should declare our belief in Jesus Christ and His Atonement. His redeeming act blesses all mankind with the gift of immortality and the potential of enjoying God's greatest gift to man, the gift of eternal life.

The second time we open our mouths, we should tell in our own words the story of the First Vision—that is, our knowledge of a boy not quite 15 years of age who went into a grove of trees and, after sincere and humble prayer, had the heavens open to him. After centuries of confusion, the

true nature of the Godhead and God's true teachings were revealed to the world.

The third time we open our mouths, let us testify of the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon complements the Bible in giving us a greater understanding of the doctrines of our Savior's gospel. The Book of Mormon is the convincing evidence that Joseph Smith is truly a prophet of God. If the Book of Mormon is true, there was a restoration of the priesthood. If the Book of Mormon is true, then with the power of that priesthood, Joseph Smith restored the Church of Jesus Christ.

Faithful shepherds experience joy

I have just concluded the book of Alma in my current reading of the Book of Mormon. Near the close of Alma's great message to the Church in Zarahemla, he said:

"For what shepherd is there among you having many sheep doth not watch over them, that the wolves enter not and devour his flock? And behold, if a wolf enter his flock doth he not drive him out? Yea, and at the last, if he can, he will destroy him.

"And now I say unto you that the good shepherd doth call after you; and if you will hearken unto his voice he will bring you into his fold, and ye are his sheep; and he commandeth you that ye suffer no ravenous wolf to enter among you, that ye may not be destroyed" (Alma 5:59–60).

The Savior is the Good Shepherd, and we are all called to His service. The ewe on the side of the rock face along the entry to Provo Canyon and these words of Alma remind me of the question the Savior asked in the 15th chapter of Luke: "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" (verse 4).

Usually when I think of herding sheep, I think of the requirement, or stewardship,

of the shepherd to do *everything* he can for *all* of his sheep. This experience, however, reminded me that it is the parable of the *lost* sheep, and my thoughts turned to the precarious nature of that one lost ewe, all alone and unable to take another step up the rock face and equally unable to turn around and find her way down. How frantic and hopeless she must have felt, completely powerless to rescue herself, one step away from certain disaster.

It is important for each of us to ponder how it feels to be lost and what it means to be a "spiritual" shepherd who will leave the 99 to find the one who is lost. Such shepherds may need the expertise and assistance of the search and rescue team, but they are present, accounted for, and climbing right beside them to save those who are infinitely valued in the sight of God, for they are His children. Such shepherds respond to the final injunction to be a member missionary that I want to share with you from the Doctrine and Covenants:

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

"And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!" (D&C 18:15–16).

As the scripture also teaches, such shepherds experience inexpressible joy. I bear witness to this fact in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Eyring

As we conclude the conference, we express appreciation to the Tabernacle Choir, the combined choir from the Salt Lake area institutes of religion, and the priesthood choir from Brigham Young University–Idaho and their conductors and organists for the beautiful and inspiring music. We also

extend thanks to all who have participated in any way in these proceedings.

Our concluding speaker at this session will be President Thomas S. Monson, our beloved prophet. Following President Monson's remarks, the choir will sing

"God Be with You Till We Meet Again." After the music, the benediction will be offered by Elder Robert C. Oaks of the Seventy. This conference will then be adjourned for six months.

President Thomas S. Monson

Expressions of gratitude and counsel

My beloved brothers and sisters, my heart is full and my feelings tender as we conclude this great general conference.

We have been richly blessed as we have listened to the counsel and testimonies of those who have spoken to us. I believe we are all more determined to live the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I express my sincere thanks to each one who participated in the conference, including those Brethren who offered prayers.

The music has been magnificent. How grateful I am for those blessed with musical talents who are willing to share their talents with others. I am reminded of the scripture found in the Doctrine and Covenants: "For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads."¹

May we long remember that which we have heard during this conference. I remind you that the messages will be printed in next month's *Ensign* and *Liahona* magazines. I urge you to study the messages and to ponder their teachings and then to apply them in your life.

I want you to know how much I love and appreciate my devoted counselors, President Henry B. Eyring and President Dieter F. Uchtdorf. They are men of wisdom and understanding. Their service is invaluable. I love and support my Brethren of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. During this conference we sustained a new member

of that Quorum. He is completely dedicated to the work of the Lord, and I testify that he is the man our Heavenly Father wants to fill this position at this time.

I express my love to the members of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric. They serve selflessly and so effectively. Similarly, I pay tribute to the general auxiliary officers. In accordance with our policy of rotation, we have sustained new general presidencies of the Young Men and of the Sunday School. We look forward to working with them. We thank those who were released from these positions at this conference and who served so faithfully in these capacities.

My brothers and sisters, may we strive to live closer to the Lord. May we remember to "pray always lest [we] enter into temptation."²

To you parents, express your love to your children. Pray for them that they may be able to withstand the evils of the world. Pray that they may grow in faith and testimony. Pray that they may pursue lives of goodness and of service to others.

Children, let your parents know you love them. Let them know how much you appreciate all they have done and continue to do for you.

Avoid pornography

Now, a word of caution to all—both young and old, both male and female. We live at a time when the adversary is using every means possible to ensnare us in his web of deceit, trying desperately to take us