



By Elder Mervyn B. Arnold
Of the Seventy

To the Rescue: We Can Do It

The Lord has provided all of the tools necessary for us to go to the rescue of our less-active and nonmember friends.

The Savior clearly understood His mission to rescue our Heavenly Father's children, for He declared: "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost. . . .

*"[For] it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."*¹

My angel mother, Jasmine Bennion Arnold, clearly understood her role to help in the rescue of our Heavenly Father's wounded or lost sheep, including her own children and grandchildren. What a marvelous role grandparents can play in the lives of their grandchildren.

Mom was usually assigned to visit teach those struggling with their faith, the less-active and part-member families; however, her flock included several others that no one had assigned her to visit. Generally her visits were not just once a month, as she quietly listened, ministered to the sick, and gave loving encouragement. The last several months of Mom's life, she was homebound, so she spent hours writing them letters, expressing her love, bearing her testimony, and lifting those who came to visit.

As we go to the rescue, God gives us power, encouragement, and blessings. When He commanded Moses to rescue the children of Israel, Moses was afraid, just as many of us are afraid. Moses excused himself, saying, "I am not eloquent, . . . but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."²

The Lord reassured Moses: "Who hath made man's mouth? . . . have not I the Lord?

"Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."³

In effect, the Lord told Moses, "You can do it!" *And you know what, so can we!*

Let me share four principles that will help in our rescue efforts.

Principle 1: We Must Not Delay Going to the Rescue

Elder Alejandro Patanía, a former Area Seventy, relates the story of his younger brother Daniel, who sailed out to sea to go fishing with his crew. After a time, Daniel received an urgent warning that a major storm was rapidly approaching. Immediately, Daniel and his crew started for port.

As the storm intensified, the engine of a nearby fishing boat ceased to function. Daniel's crew hooked a cable to the disabled boat and began towing it to safety. They radioed for help, knowing that, with the increasing storm, they needed immediate assistance.

As loved ones anxiously waited, representatives from the coast guard, the fishermen's association, and the navy met to decide the best rescue strategy. Some wanted to leave right away but were told to wait for a plan. While those in the storm continued pleading for help, the representatives continued





As loved ones anxiously waited, rescuers delayed their efforts until it was too late.

meeting, trying to agree on the proper protocol and a plan.

When a rescue group was finally organized, one last desperate call came. The raging storm had broken the cable between the two boats, and Daniel's crew was going back to see if they could save their fellow fishermen. In the end, both ships sank, and their crews, including Elder Patanía's brother Daniel, were lost.

Elder Patanía compared this tragedy to the Lord's admonition when He said, "Ye [have] not strengthened, . . . [or] brought again that which was driven away, . . . [or] sought that which was lost; . . . and I will require my flock at [your] hand."⁴

Elder Patanía explained that, while we must be organized in our councils, quorums, auxiliaries, and even as individuals, we must not delay going to the rescue. Sometimes many weeks pass as we talk about how to help families or individuals who are in special need. We deliberate about who will visit them and the approach to take. Meanwhile, our lost brothers and sisters continue needing and sometimes even calling and pleading for help. We must not delay.

Principle 2: We Must Never Give Up

President Thomas S. Monson, who has sounded the clarion call to go to the rescue, noted, "Our members need to be reminded that it is never too late when it comes to our . . . less-active members . . . who could have been considered a hopeless cause."⁵

Like many of you, I have shared the gospel with some who are soon baptized or activated, and others—such as my nonmember friend Tim and his less-active wife, Charlene—take much more time.

For over 25 years I engaged Tim in gospel conversations and took Tim and Charlene to temple open houses.

Others joined the rescue; however, Tim declined each invitation made to meet with the missionaries.

One weekend I was assigned to preside at a stake conference. I had asked the stake president to fast and pray about whom we should visit. I was shocked when he handed me the name of my friend Tim. When Tim's bishop, the stake president, and I knocked on the door, Tim opened it, looked at me, looked at the bishop, and then said, "Bishop, I thought you told me you were going to bring somebody special!"

Then Tim laughed and said, "Come on in, Merv." A miracle occurred that day. Tim has now been baptized, and he and Charlene have been sealed in the temple. We must never give up.

Principle 3: How Great Shall Be Your Joy If You Bring Save It Be One Soul unto Christ

Many years ago in a general conference, I spoke of how José de Souza Marques understood the words of the Savior that "if any man among you be strong in the Spirit, let him take with him him that is weak, that he may . . . become strong also."⁶

Brother Marques knew the name of every sheep in his priests quorum and realized that Fernando was missing. He hunted for Fernando at his house, then looked for him at a friend's home, and even went to the beach.

He finally found Fernando surfing in the ocean. He did not hesitate until the boat sank, like in Daniel's story. He immediately entered the water to rescue his lost sheep, bringing him home rejoicing.⁷

He then ensured through continual ministering that Fernando never again would leave the fold.⁸

Allow me to update you on what has happened since Fernando was rescued

and to share the joy that came from rescuing just one lost sheep. Fernando married his sweetheart, Maria, in the temple. They now have 5 children and 13 grandchildren, all of whom are active in the Church. Many other relatives and their families have also joined the Church. Together they have submitted thousands of their ancestors' names to receive temple ordinances, and the blessings just keep coming.

Fernando is now serving as bishop for the third time, and he continues to rescue, just like he was rescued. He recently shared, "In our ward, we have 32 active young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, 21 of whom were rescued in the last 18 months." As individuals, families, quorums, auxiliaries, classes, and home and visiting teachers, *we can do that!*

Principle 4: No Matter Our Age, We Are All Called to Go to the Rescue

President Henry B. Eyring declared, "Whatever our age, capacity, Church

calling, or location, we are as one called to the work to help [the Savior] in His harvest of souls until He comes again."⁹

Each day more and more of our children, our youth, our young single adults, and our adult members of all ages are heeding the Savior's clarion call to go to the rescue. Thank you for your efforts! Allow me to share some examples:

Amy, age 7, invited her friend Arianna and her family to her annual Primary sacrament meeting program. A few months later, Arianna and her family were baptized.

Allan, a young single adult, felt inspired to share the Church videos, *Mormon Messages*, and verses of scripture with all his friends using social media.

Sister Reeves began sharing the gospel with each telemarketer who called.

James invited his nonmember friend Shane to his daughter's baptism.



Spencer sent his less-active sister a link to President Russell M. Nelson's conference address and reported, "She read the talk, and a window was opened."

The Lord has provided all of the tools necessary for us to go to the rescue of our less-active and nonmember friends. *We can all do it!*

I invite each of you to heed the Savior's call to go to the rescue. *We can do it!*

I solemnly testify that I know Jesus is the Good Shepherd, that He loves us, and that He will bless us as we go to the rescue. I know He lives; I know it. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



Rescued by a concerned leader when he was a young man, Fernando Araujo (above, center in both photos) rescues young men today (above) as a bishop and enjoys a posterity (top) that is active in the Church.

NOTES

1. Matthew 18:11, 14; emphasis added.
2. Exodus 4:10.
3. Exodus 4:11–12.
4. Ezekiel 34:4, 10.
5. Thomas S. Monson, October 2015 General Authority Leadership Meeting, used with permission.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 84:106.
7. See Luke 15:5.
8. See Mervyn B. Arnold, "Strengthen Thy Brethren," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 46–47.
9. Henry B. Eyring, "We Are One," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 62.