

# *Saving Lives*

ALTON L. THYGERSON

I admire those with musical talent. I sometimes wonder where I was when that type of talent was handed out. A best-selling book claims there is a way to excel. It claims that some of the greatest athletes, entrepreneurs, scientists, and musicians emerge after spending 10,000 hours in their chosen field as they master it. The book includes examples such as the musically talented Beatles and computer savvy Bill Gates, each of whom expended 10,000 hours of work in a specific field before achieving expertise.<sup>1</sup>

I was raised in the mission field and had never seen more than 200 Latter-day Saints together. When 200 Church members were seen together it was either at a district conference or while visiting relatives in the small Mormon community of Virden, New Mexico.

Many of you can relate to having a similar background. Some of you can recall that the average Sunday meeting attendance was 25 people. Meetings were held in a rented building, and often cigarette butts and beer cans left by another group's Saturday night festivities had to be picked up.

My sister and I were the only Latter-day Saints in our high school. I remember receiving the advice that it is best to marry a Church member and that the marriage should be in

the temple. As a teenager, I would look around and wonder, "Well, who is that going to be?"

My father received a promotion that necessitated moving to another town. In high school I was a stranger among my new classmates. On the first day in my American history class the teacher asked questions that served both as a preview of the course and as an attempt to arouse interest in history. Examples included

- Who really "discovered" America?
- What did Lewis and Clark do?
- Who was Pancho Villa?
- What was Custer's Last Stand?

One of the questions the teacher asked was: Do any of you know the real name of the Mormon Church? While my classmates had readily answered or attempted to answer the previous questions, no one responded to this one. After what seemed like a long period of silence, I slowly raised my hand and said, "The Mormon Church's name is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." Even today,

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*Alton L. Thygerson was a professor of health science in the BYU College of Life Sciences when this devotional address was given on 28 September 2010.*

many people do not know that answer. At the end of class, the teacher asked me to stay, and he politely asked if I was a Mormon. I replied, “Yes.”

He became my advocate. I believe he was a factor in getting my name on the short list of nominees for various honors and recognitions during my high school years.

We all have an advocate and that is Jesus Christ. He is our Advocate with the Father, meaning that He pleads our case before the Father. It’s part of the Atonement, of which I’ll enlarge upon later.<sup>2</sup>

### **President Lorenzo Snow Was Rescued**

I’ve spent a career teaching and authoring books and other publications about helping injured people. During that time I’ve come across numerous rescue stories.

A story in Church history tells of the rescue of future Church president Lorenzo Snow. He was called on a mission to the Hawaiian Islands. After the ship’s arrival Lorenzo and his companions were going ashore in a smaller boat when suddenly an immense wave cap-sized their tiny craft and washed them overboard. All were accounted for except Lorenzo. A frantic search turned up his lifeless body. His companions quickly made for the shore. Upon reaching land they rolled him over an empty barrel to expel the water. Then they were impressed to take turns applying mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, a little-known technique at the time. Lorenzo miraculously recovered.<sup>3</sup>

Here is a side note about the history of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The Paris Academy of Sciences in 1740 first suggested that for drowning victims mouth-to-mouth resuscitation should be tried. The technique did not catch on until two physicians promoted mouth-to-mouth resuscitation in 1956. Between those dates, various methods such as blowing air into the victim’s mouth with blacksmith billows and various ways of pushing on the back

and chest and raising the arms were applied as attempts to revive nonbreathing victims. In 1960 researchers combined breaths and chest compressions to create CPR.<sup>4</sup>

The American Heart Association and the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation guidelines indicate that laypersons who are unable or unwilling to provide breaths should be encouraged to provide compression-only CPR to individuals suffering out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. However, if a trained lay rescuer is able to perform breaths, then chest compressions and breaths should be provided. Breaths combined with compressions and compression-only CPR are currently considered equivalent.<sup>5</sup>

### **President Thomas S. Monson Was a Rescuer**

In many of his general conference addresses and talks to young men and women, President Thomas S. Monson has spoken about rescuers and heroes who have led lives worthy of emulation. He has reached into the scriptures for accounts, into history for anecdotes, and into newspapers and magazines for reports about individuals who have helped or even saved others. And he has shared a wealth of examples from his own experiences.<sup>6</sup>

A little-known fact is that President Monson has rescued someone in distress. Here’s how the story goes: A warm summer day found 12-year-old Thomas Monson floating in a large, inflated inner tube from a tractor tire down the river in Provo Canyon. Just as he was about to enter the swiftest part of the river, he heard frantic cries, “Save her! Save her!” A young woman had fallen into a deep part of the river. None of the people on the bank could swim to save her. President Monson reports that he saw the top of her head disappear several times under the water before he stretched forth his hand, grabbed her hair, and lifted her over the side of the tube. He paddled the tube with the young woman over to her relatives and friends, where he was hugged and kissed.

He says that he was embarrassed and that he quickly returned to the tube and continued his float down the river.<sup>7</sup>

President Monson's biography has a well-deserved title: *To the Rescue*.<sup>8</sup> The contents tell of his decades of saving people through his service.

### Rescue Stories

In order to track their popularity, Hollywood movie stars, professional sports figures, politicians, companies, and organizations sometimes subscribe to a newspaper clipping service.

A number of years ago, I conducted a small research project dealing with rescues. There were no databases, so I subscribed to a newspaper clipping service for the purpose of collecting accounts of rescues from across the country.

In a single year, 520 news reports of rescues were collected. Excluded were professional rescuers such as lifeguards, police, and firefighters.<sup>9</sup>

This project led me to search for other rescue stories. The press at that time carried an account of the rescue of a woman who had been swept downstream by a strong river current. Three teenagers riding their bicycles on a path near the river spotted the woman. While one of them went for help, the other two tried to catch up with the woman, who was helpless in the river. After about a mile they waded into the river and pulled the exhausted woman onto the bank. It was only then that one of the boys discovered that he had saved his own mother's life. This story should remind us that we never know who might need help.

### Helping Behavior

You are being helpful when you provide directions to a lost driver, hold the door open for a stranger, pick up packages that have been dropped, or let someone in a hurry cut in line before you. These forms of helping are not very costly, and most of us give and receive such benefits every day.

Helping in these ways is so common that we often take them for granted as just a part of life. But other forms of helping can be more costly. People may go out of their way to return a lost wallet, offer assistance after a vehicle crash, or help free a stranger's car stuck in the snow. Not everyone does these things, but they happen frequently.

Some forms of helping are less tangible than holding open a door or pushing a car out of the snow. Often we are needed—or we need others—to provide moral support, encouraging words, or a shoulder to cry on. This kind of emotional help and social support is common among families and friends and is key to our having a happy and healthy life.

Most of you have heard the following: "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do or any kindness I can show to any human being, let me do it now, . . . for I shall not pass this way again."<sup>10</sup>

### Decisions About Helping

A good deal of research has been conducted on "bystander intervention." This describes the situation in which a person sees someone in trouble and must decide whether or not to help the victim.<sup>11</sup>

As the preceding examples illustrate, there are many different ways in which a person can help others. Because of this diversity, I will focus upon spontaneous emergency help typically involving strangers.

At some time everyone will be faced with the decision of whether or not to help an injured victim. Making a quick decision to get involved is more likely to happen if we have already considered the possibility of facing an emergency and decided to help. With 180,000 injury-related deaths and 26 million disabling injuries each year in this country, everyone can expect to face an injured victim sometime during their lifetime.<sup>12</sup>

Unless you were raised by Attila the Hun, you have been taught that it is good to help

others. If you take a social psychology course, you will learn about a 28-year-old woman named Kitty Genovese, who was returning home from her job at about three o'clock in the morning. As she left her car, she was attacked and stabbed by a knife-wielding man. Her screams woke up the people in the building next to the parking lot, and the attacker fled but returned a few minutes later and stabbed her again. She screamed for help. Later investigations revealed that about a dozen people had either heard or seen the attack but did nothing.<sup>13</sup>

The movie actor Sal Mineo, who starred in Hollywood classics such as *Giant* and *Exodus*, was returning to his apartment at about one o'clock in the morning. As he left his car, a knife-wielding man stabbed him. Several neighbors heard his screams for help and called the police. A man ran into the alley and gave mouth-to-mouth resuscitation as an effort to save him. The neighbors did not idly stand by.<sup>14</sup>

The response of people to Sal Mineo being attacked shows that humans have compassion for others. However, the Kitty Genovese case demonstrates that people can have a callous disregard for another person's welfare.

### **The Starfish Story**

Helping others can make a difference. Here's a story worth telling:

A man walking on an ocean beach noticed that a young man was reaching down, picking up small objects, and throwing them into the ocean. As he came closer, he called out, "Good morning! What you are doing?"

The young man paused, looked up, and replied "Throwing starfish into the ocean."

"Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" asked the older man.

To this, the young man replied, "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die."

Upon hearing this, the man said, "Young man, don't you realize that there are miles and miles of beach and there are starfish

along every mile? You cannot possibly make a difference!"

At this the young man bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it into the ocean. As it landed in the water, he said, "It made a difference for that one."<sup>15</sup>

Few stories have gained the Internet popularity the way the starfish story has. It's a story of the power within each one of us to make a difference in the lives of others. It's a strong reminder that we can help each other.

### **Be Prepared to Help**

Thousands of people have spontaneously helped others. We should expect that if an earthquake or a car crash happens, many people will freely and willingly step forward to help.

The competency of a bystander plays a critical part in whether or not help will be offered. If the bystander has first-aid and CPR training, help is more likely to be given. Therefore, I strongly suggest that you obtain first-aid and CPR training. If you have already, you may need updating, because procedures have changed.

For example, first aiders no longer give syrup of ipecac for ingested poison, no longer apply pressure on the brachial or femoral arteries to help control bleeding, and no longer use suction for a venomous snakebite, and the list goes on. Also important to learn are a lot of new procedures replacing ineffective and unproven methods.

Sadly, less than one-third of the out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest victims receive CPR. But if effective and provided immediately, CPR doubles or triples a victim's chance of survival.<sup>16</sup>

The rescuers we read about are not larger-than-life people; rather, they are ordinary people who have internalized a sense of empathy for others. They have developed a caring attitude and gained skills that prompt and enable them to respond to emergencies. Their moral values urge them to intervene.

### The Good Samaritan

No discussion about helping others would be complete without covering the parable of the good Samaritan.

The parable appears only in the Gospel of Luke.<sup>17</sup> In the parable a Jewish traveler is beaten, robbed, and left half dead. First a priest and then a Levite come by, but both avoid the man. Finally, a Samaritan comes by and helps. Remember that Samaritans and Jews generally despised each other. The Samaritan helps by giving first aid to the victim, then transporting and staying with him until the next day. The Samaritan gives the innkeeper money to care for the victim with the understanding that if more was needed, on the next trip he would pay for the extra care.

There are two ways of looking at the parable of the good Samaritan, and both ways are correct.

One explanation has the parable being an allegory with the Samaritan representing Jesus Christ, who saves the man wounded by sins. For more information about the parable's symbolisms, BYU professor John W. Welch has authored a detailed analysis in Church magazines and *BYU Studies*.<sup>18</sup>

The second explanation has the parable exemplifying the ethics that Jesus espoused—that of helping our neighbor.

Of Jesus' parables, none has worked its way deeper into our beliefs. The phrase *good Samaritan* is used to describe any person who goes out of his or her way to help another. It's a theme that newspaper reporters love to feature, because it captures readers' attention and imagination. The largest recreational vehicle club in the United States gets its name, the Good Sam Club, from the idea of members helping one another. Numerous hospitals carry the name "Good Samaritan." The term *good Samaritan* appears as the title on one of my first-aid manuals.<sup>19</sup> Good Samaritan laws encourage people to help injured victims by granting them immunity against lawsuits.

In the parable, Jesus is not content just to define what *neighbor* means. He tells us to do as the Samaritan does, to help others who need help.

A California physician maintained a ledger that chronicled 120 people whose lives he had saved as a good Samaritan. The victims were not his patients in his office or a hospital. They were strangers. Most were involved in freeway car crashes. Others faced drowning, being thrown from a horse, electrocution, choking, cardiac arrest, and falling off a cliff. In all 120 cases, the doctor stepped in and saved a life.<sup>20</sup>

### Jesus Christ Is Our Savior, Our Rescuer

While the physician's story of saving 120 people is very commendable, the most significant rescuer that we have is Jesus Christ. He is known as our Savior for a good reason.

Only Jesus can save us. The clearest expression of this is given by King Benjamin in the Book of Mormon: "There shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ."<sup>21</sup>

To be saved by Jesus Christ means to be saved by the Atonement. There are several ways in which the Savior saves us:<sup>22</sup>

1. All people will be resurrected from the dead and thus saved from physical death.<sup>23</sup>
2. All people, except the sons of perdition, will be assigned to a kingdom of glory and thus be rescued from the influence of Satan.<sup>24</sup>
3. The ultimate salvation, referred to in the scriptures, is known as exaltation. Exaltation is another way of saying "the type of life that God lives." This is life in the highest degree of glory in the celestial kingdom.<sup>25</sup>

A simple explanation of how the Atonement works can be illustrated by a man falling into a pit so deep he cannot climb out. The man calls for help and a passerby puts a ladder down into the pit, allowing the man to climb out.<sup>26</sup>

We are like the man in the pit. Committing sin is like falling into a pit, and we cannot get

out by ourselves. Just as the passerby heard the man's cry for help, Heavenly Father sent His Only Begotten Son to provide the means for our escape. Jesus Christ's Atonement could be compared to the ladder; it gives us the means to climb out. Just as the man in the pit had to climb up the ladder, we must repent of our sins and obey the gospel principles and ordinances to climb out of our pit. Thus, "it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do."<sup>27</sup>

### Closing

We should be grateful that there is a way for us to overcome sin and physical death. I testify that Jesus Christ provides that way through the Atonement. He is our Savior, and it is in His name that I close, amen.

### Notes

1. See Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008).
2. See D&C 45:3; 1 John 2:1; D&C 38:4.
3. See "Lorenzo Snow," *Friend*, April 1980, 45.
4. American Heart Association, "History of CPR"; <http://americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3012990>.
5. Robert A. Berg, Robin Hemphill, Benjamin S. Abella, Tom P. Aufderheide, Diana M. Cave, Mary Fran Hazinski, E. Brooke Lerner, Thomas D. Rea, Michael R. Sayre, and Robert A. Swor, "Part 5: Adult Basic Life Support: 2010 American Heart Association Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiovascular Care," *Circulation*, 122 (supplement 3), S685–S705.
6. See "We Have Heroes," *Church News*, 31 July 2010, 16.
7. See Thomas S. Monson, "The Message: Save Her! Save Her!" *New Era*, May 1997, 4–7.
8. Heidi S. Swinton, *To the Rescue: The Biography of Thomas S. Monson* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010).
9. Alton L. Thygeson, "Bystander Rescues," *Emergency*, February 1983, 18, 20–21, 48.
10. Generally credited to Stephen Grellet, but without proven attribution.
11. Bibb Latané and John M. Darley, *The Unresponsive Bystander: Why Doesn't He Help?* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970).
12. National Safety Council, *Injury Facts*, 2010.
13. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder\\_of\\_Kitty\\_Genovese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Kitty_Genovese); also see Samuel P. Oliner, *Do Unto Others: Extraordinary Acts of Ordinary People* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2003), 92.
14. Louis A. Penner, *Social Psychology: A Contemporary Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 137.
15. Adapted from Loren C. Eiseley, *The Star Thrower* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979).
16. American Heart Association, [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/CPRandECC/WhatisCPR/CPRFactsandStats/CPR-Statistics\\_UCM\\_307542\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/CPRandECC/WhatisCPR/CPRFactsandStats/CPR-Statistics_UCM_307542_Article.jsp).
17. See Luke 10:25–37.
18. John W. Welch, *Ensign*, February 2007, 40–47; *Liahona*, February 2007, 26–33; *Brigham Young University Studies*, Spring 1999, 51–115.
19. Alton Thygeson, *Good Samaritan: Helping in an Emergency* (Sudbury, Massachusetts: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2007).
20. "And Baby Makes 121 (or So)—Doctor Is a Hero Again," *Orlando Sentinel*, 21 November 1991; [http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1991-11-21/news/9111210697\\_1\\_benis-plummer-choking](http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1991-11-21/news/9111210697_1_benis-plummer-choking).
21. Mosiah 3:17.
22. Adapted from Tad R. Callister, *The Infinite Atonement* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 51–52.
23. See 1 Corinthians 15:22; Alma 11:42.
24. See D&C 76:71, 77, 86.
25. See D&C 132:19.
26. Adapted from *Primary 7: New Testament* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997), 104.
27. 2 Nephi 25:23.