

Remembering the Sheep

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The principle of counting and accounting works. It is the Lord's way.

Christ is the Good Shepherd. Each one of the flock is precious to Him. He patterned shepherding and taught us by word and deed the qualities of a good shepherd, including knowing your sheep by name, loving them, finding those that are lost, feeding, and, ultimately, leading them back home again. He expects us to do the same as His undershepherds.

We can learn much about ministering the Lord's way from the ancient prophet—and exceptional shepherd—Moroni. He lived during very difficult times, not having the benefits of cell phones, computers, and the internet. But he managed to keep track of the sheep. How was this done? We get a glimpse into his methodology in Moroni 6. There we read that members “were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way. ... The church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls” (Moroni 6:4–5; emphasis added).

For Moroni, it was all about people—names! He practiced the principle of counting and accounting so that all would be remembered. Any who struggled or wandered were noticed, allowing the Saints to discuss their welfare in councils. Like the shepherd who left the ninety and nine (safe and secure, I am certain) and went after the one that was lost (see Luke 15:4–7), we have been asked to be just as aware of our flocks—to notice and remember and go and do likewise.

Princippet om at tælle og varetage virker. Det er Herrens måde.

Kristus er den gode Hyrde. Hver enkelt i flokken er dyrebar i hans øjne. Han var et eksempel på at være en hyrde og underviste os i ord og gerning om en god hyrdes egenskaber, herunder at kende sine får ved navn, elske dem, finde de vildfarne, give dem næring og i sidste ende føre dem hjem igen. Han forventer, at vi gør det samme som hans underhyrder.

Vi kan lære meget om at drage omsorg på Herrens måde fra en fordums profet – og enestående hyrde – Moroni. Han levede i en meget vanskelig tid uden fordelene ved mobiltelefoner, computere og internettet. Men han formåede at holde styr på fårene. Hvordan gjorde han det? Vi får et kort indblik i hans metoder i Moroni 6. Der læser vi, at medlemmerne blev »regnet blandt Kristi kirkes folk; og deres navne blev nedskrevet, så de kunne blive husket og få næring ved Guds gode ord for at holde dem på den rette vej ... Kirken mødtes ofte for at faste og bede og tale med hinanden om deres sjæles velbefindende« (Moroni 6:4–5; fremhævelse tilføjet).

For Moroni drejede det sig om mennesker – navne! Han praktiserede princippet om at tælle og varetage, således at alle måtte blive husket. Enhver, der kæmpede eller kom på afveje, blev set, hvilket gjorde, at de hellige kunne tale sammen om deres velfærd i råd. Ligesom hyrden, der forlod de nioghalvfems (som jeg er sikker på var i sikkerhed) og gik efter den ene, der var faret vild (se Lukas 15:4–7), er vi blevet bedt om at være lige så opmærksomme på vores flokke – at lægge

As a mission leader in India, I recall asking a young branch president about some of his goals for the coming year: “How many men will you prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood?” His immediate response was “Seven!”

I wondered from where in the ether he had conjured up that very specific number! Before I could respond, he produced a piece of paper with the numbers one through seven written down the side. The first five lines had names on them—real people that he and his elders quorum were going to invite and encourage to have the blessing of the priesthood in their lives. Of course, I had to ask about the empty lines six and seven. “Oh, President,” he said, shaking his head sympathetically, “surely we will baptize at least two men in the first of the year who could have the priesthood by the end of the year.” This superb leader understood the principle of counting and accounting.

Christ has organized His Church in such a way that it should be difficult to forget a soul, for each is dear to Him. Every individual in a ward, regardless of age or gender, has a multitude of stewards—shepherds—who are tasked with looking after them, with remembering. A young man, for example, has assigned to his well-being a bishopric, ministering brothers, adult youth advisers, seminary teachers, quorum presidencies, and then some—all serving as safety nets, strung up firmly beneath that youth to catch him if he falls. Even if just one net is properly positioned, that young man will be safe, noticed, and remembered. And yet, often we find nary a net in place. People wander off routinely into the mists—and no one notices. How can we be better shepherds? We can learn to count and account.

The Church supplies us with reports and tools to do just that—to remember. The Quarterly Report is a prime example. It allows us to count and account for each member multiple times and to notice those who go missing or need our help and our love. The Action and Interview List identifies those who require our attention right now, as do the Temple Recommend Status report and others. These counting and accounting tools focus us in on people. Who needs a calling, a priesthood advancement, or help taking a family name to the temple? Who could we be

mærke til, huske og gå ud og gøre det samme.

Som missionsleder i Indien husker jeg, at jeg spurgte en ung grenspræsident om nogle af hans mål for det kommende år: »Hvor mange mænd vil du forberede til at modtage Det Melkisedekske Præstedømme?« Med det samme svarede han: »Syv!«

Jeg undrede mig over, hvor dette meget præcise tal mon var kommet fra! Før jeg kunne nå at sige noget, hev han et stykke papir frem med tallene 1-7 skrevet ned langs siden. De første fem linjer var udfyldt med navne – virkelige personer, som han sammen med ældsternes kvorum ville indbyde og opmuntre til at modtage velsignelsen ved at bære præstedømmet i deres liv. Selvfølgelig måtte jeg spørge ind til linje 6 og 7, der var tomme. »Åh, præsident,« sagde han, mens han rystede overbærende på hovedet, »vi kommer sikkert til at døbe mindst to mænd i begyndelsen af året, som kan modtage præstedømmet, inden året er omme.« Denne ypperlige leder forstod princippet om at tælle og varetage.

Kristus har organiseret sin kirke på en sådan måde, at det bør være vanskeligt at glemme en sjæl, fordi hver enkelt er dyrebar for ham. Hver eneste person i en menighed, uanset alder eller køn, har en række forvaltere – hyrder – som har fået til opgave at se efter dem og huske dem. For eksempel varetages en ung mands velfærd af et biskopråd, omsorgsbrødre, voksne rådgivere i unge mænd, seminarlærere, kvorumspræsidenter og flere andre – der alle tjener som sikkerhedsnet, der er spændt stramt ud under den unge mand for at gribe ham, hvis han falder. Selv hvis blot et enkelt net er ordentligt spændt ud, er denne unge mand i sikkerhed og vil blive set og husket. Og alligevel ser vi ofte, at ikke ét net er spændt ud. Folk vandrer regelmæssigt ud i tågen – og ingen bemærker det. Hvordan kan vi være bedre hyrder? Vi kan lære at tælle og varetage.

Kirken har sørget for rapporter og værktøjer til at gøre netop dette – at huske. Kvartalsrapporten er et rigtig godt eksempel. Den gør det muligt for os at tælle hvert eneste medlem adskillige gange og varetage deres behov og at lægge mærke til dem, der mangler, eller som har behov for vores hjælp og vores kærlighed. Lister over handlinger og interviews finder frem til dem, der har brug for vores opmærksomhed lige nu, ligesom rapporten over tempelanbefalingsstatus og andre rapporter gør. Disse værktøjer, der er beregnet til at tælle og varetage, leder vores fokus hen på

helping to prepare for a full-time mission? Who went missing this month? These tools help us to remember people.

I knew a family from the United States who took an assignment in Africa. On their very first Sunday, they walked into the only Church unit in the country, where they were greeted enthusiastically. By the end of the morning, the man's wife had been called as the Relief Society president and he as the Young Men leader! He asked an exhausted-looking branch president how many young men there were. This faithful, first-generation leader pointed to the back of the sacrament hall and said, "Those two right there." The man was appropriately skeptical, so he took a branch roster home, quickly noting that there were actually 20 young men on the list. He returned to the branch president and asked for two dynamic, bilingual young adults to serve as his counselors and then sat down with them and the two boys to review the names.

Then these diligent young people went to work. Over the next few months, they found every boy listed. Name by name, those lost sheep were welcomed back by their peers and fed spiritually and physically! Within a year, on any given Sunday, there was an average of 21 young men in attendance. Thank goodness for young men who counted and accounted.

A dear friend of mine, as a young graduate student, moved with his family to a large American city to continue his education. He was immediately called to preside over the elders quorum. A little nervous about his first interview with the stake president, he was determined to go prepared. He told the stake president that he had three goals for the upcoming year: (1) 90 percent ministering, (2) a substantive gospel lesson each week, and (3) a well-planned quorum activity every month.

Smiling at my friend, this wise stake president asked, "Can you name a less-active quorum member who you could help get to the temple with his family this year?" That caught my friend by surprise. He thought carefully and came up with a name. "Write that down," directed the stake president. Then this experienced leader asked the same question three more times—and

mennesker. Hvem har behov for en kaldelse, at avancere i præstedømmet eller hjælp til at tage et slægtsnavn til templet? Hvem kan vi hjælpe med at forberede sig til en fuldtidsmission? Hvem mangledes denne måned? Disse værktøjer hjælper os med at huske mennesker.

Jeg kendte en familie fra USA, der tog et job i Afrika. Deres allerførste søndag trådte de ind i landets eneste kirkebygning, hvor de fik en varm velkomst. Ved slutningen af formiddagen var mandens kone blevet kaldet som Hjelpeforeningens præsident, og han som leder for de unge mænd! Han spurgte en grenspræsident, der så udmattet ud, hvor mange unge mænd der var. Denne trofaste leder, der er første generation i kirken, pegede ned i bunden af kirkesalen og sagde: »De to lige der«. Manden var forståeligt nok skeptisk, så han tog en oversigt over grenen med hjem og fandt hurtigt, at der faktisk var 20 unge mænd på listen. Han vendte tilbage til grenspræsidenten og bad om to dynamiske, tosprogede unge voksne, der kunne tjene som hans rådgivere, og satte sig ned sammen med dem og de to drenge for at gennemgå navnene.

Derpå gik disse flittige unge mennesker i gang med arbejdet. I løbet af de næste par måneder fandt de alle de drenge, der var opført på listen. Navn for navn blev disse vildfarne får budt velkommen tilbage af de unge mænd og blev næret åndeligt såvel som fysisk! Inden for et år var der på en hvilken som helst søndag i gennemsnit 21 unge mænd til stede. Af hjertet tak for unge mænd, der talte og varetog.

En af mine kære venner, en ung kandidatstuderende, flyttede sammen med sin familie til en stor amerikansk by for at fortsætte sin uddannelse. Han blev straks kaldet til at præsidere over ældsternes kvorum. Eftersom han var lidt nervøs for sit første interview med stavspræsidenten, var han fast besluttet på at komme forberedt. Han fortalte stavspræsidenten, at han havde tre mål for det kommende år: (1) 90 procent omsorg, (2) en indholdsrig lektion i evangeliet hver uge og (3) en velplanlagt kvorumsaktivitet hver måned.

Denne kloge stavspræsident sagde så, mens han smilede til min ven: »Kan du komme i tanke om et mindre aktivt medlem af kvorummet, du kan hjælpe til at komme i templet med sin familie i år?« Dette kom bag på min ven. Han tænkte sig godt om og nævnte så et navn. »Skriv det ned,« bad stavspræsidenten ham. Derefter stillede denne erfarne leder det samme spørgs-

the interview was over. This young man walked out of that interview having learned one of his greatest lessons on leadership and ministering. He went into the interview with programs, lessons, and activities. He walked out with names! Those four names subsequently became a major focus of his ministry and that of his quorum.

As a mission leader, I visited one of my branches one Sunday morning. I noticed that the branch president kept taking a card out of his pocket and writing on it. I decided to ask him about that after the closing prayer. Once the meeting ended and before I could inquire about the card, the branch mission leader raced to the podium, where he was handed the paper. I quickly followed this enthusiastic leader to his weekly branch missionary coordination meeting. Before they started, he took the paper out of his pocket. It was filled with the names of members who had been missing from sacrament meeting. Within a few minutes, each member of the council had selected a name or two, committing to visit them that very day to make sure that they were OK and to let them know that they had been missed. Now that is counting and accounting.

I recall a district, hours by jet from the nearest temple, where maintaining a current recommend was a high priority, despite the fact that it would likely never be used. The first Sunday of each month, leaders used their counting tools to account for their endowed members. If they found that a recommend was soon to expire, the executive secretary would schedule a renewal interview. People with expired recommends were counseled over, then sought out to assist them in returning to the covenant path. I asked how many of their endowed members had a current recommend. The answer was an astounding 98.6 percent. When asked about the six whose recommends had expired, the leaders were able to identify them by name and described to me the efforts being made to get them back!

A few years ago, my family moved back to the United States. We were excited to attend church here after 26 amazing years in smaller, more isolated units. I was called as a ward missionary. We had a great ward mission leader and

mål tre gange til – og så var interviewet slut. Da denne unge mand forlod interviewet, havde han lært en af sine vigtigste lektioner om lederskab og omsorg. Han gik ind til interviewet med programmer, lektioner og aktiviteter. Han forlod det igen med navne! Disse fire navne blev efterfølgende et hovedfokus i hans og hans kvorums omsorgsindsats.

Som missionsleder besøgte jeg engang en af mine grene en søndag morgen. Jeg bemærkede, at grenspræsidenten hele tiden tog et kort op af lommen og skrev på det. Jeg besluttede mig for at spørge ham om det efter afslutningsbønnen. Så snart mødet var forbi, og før jeg kunne nå at spørge ind til kortet, skyndte grenens missionsleder sig op på forhøjningen, hvor han fik overrakt papiret. Jeg fulgte hurtigt efter denne entusiastiske leder ind til hans ugentlige koordinationsmøde for missionering. Før de gik i gang, tog han kortet op af lommen. Det var fyldt med navne på medlemmer, der ikke havde været til stede ved nadvermødet. Inden for få minutter havde hvert medlem af rådet udvalgt et navn eller to med en forpligtelse om at besøge dem samme dag for at sikre sig, at de havde det godt og for at fortælle dem, at de var savnet. Sedetkalder jeg at tælle og varetage.

Jeg husker et distrikt, der lå flere timer med fly fra det nærmeste tempel, hvor det at have en gyldig tempelanbefaling blev prioriteret højt, på trods af at den sandsynligvis aldrig ville blive brugt. Den første søndag i hver måned anvendte lederne deres optællingsværktøjer til at tage vare på medlemmer, der havde modtaget deres begavelse. Hvis de opdagede, at der var en tempelanbefaling, der var ved at udløbe, ville grensassistenten planlægge et interview for at få den fornyet. Der blev holdt råd om dem, hvis tempelanbefalinger var udløbet, som derpå blev opsøgt og hjulpet til at vende tilbage til pagtsstien. Jeg spurgte, hvor mange af deres medlemmer, som havde modtaget deres begavelse, havde en gyldig anbefaling. Svaret var imponerende: 98,6 %. Da de blev spurgt om de seks mennesker, hvis anbefaling var udløbet, kunne lederne identificere dem ved navn og beskrev for mig den indsats, der blev lagt i at bringe dem tilbage!

For nogle år siden flyttede min familie tilbage til USA. Vi var glade for at kunne gå i kirke her efter 26 fantastiske år i mindre, mere isolerede enheder. Jeg blev kaldet som menighedsmissionær. Vi havde en fantastisk missions-

were doing exciting things and teaching wonderful people. I asked to attend a ward council meeting to observe and to get their help with the friends we were working with. I was surprised when all that was discussed was an upcoming ward activity. I approached the ward mission leader afterward and opined that he didn't get the chance to return and report on our people. His response? "Oh, I never get to report."

I contrasted that with a branch council meeting in Lahore, Pakistan, that I had attended just weeks before. This little group sat around a small table together, and all they talked about were people. Names. Each leader reported on their stewardship and the individuals and families that they were concerned about. All had the chance to add their thoughts on the best ways that they could bless those being discussed. Plans were made and assignments given. What a brilliant lesson in counting and accounting by name from our first-generation brothers and sisters.

In the Church of Jesus Christ, we have been instructed by prophets past and prophets present—and by the pattern set by our Savior—how to minister. We take names, we remember, and we counsel over the welfare of souls. Leaders who do this will never run out of agenda items in their council meetings! The principle of counting and accounting works. It is the Lord's way. We can do better. To God, who created the universe and rules over all, this work—His work and glory—is very personal. And so it should be for each of us, as instruments in His hands in His amazing work of salvation and exaltation. Miracles in the lives of real people will result. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

leder i menigheden, og vi lavede spændende ting og underviste vidunderlige mennesker. Jeg bad om at måtte deltage i et menighedsrådsmøde for at observere og få deres hjælp til de venner, vi arbejdede med. Det overraskede mig, at alt, der blev drøftet, var en kommende menighedsaktivitet. Jeg gik op til menighedens missionsleder bagefter og gav udtryk for, at han jo ikke nåede at vende tilbage og rapportere om disse mennesker. Hans svar? »Åh, jeg får egentlig aldrig mulighed for at rapportere.«

Jeg sammenlignede dette med det grensrådsmøde i Lahore i Pakistan, jeg havde deltaget i blot få uger forinden. Denne lille gruppe sad sammen rundt om et lille bord, og alt, de talte om, var mennesker. Navne. Hver leder aflagde regnskab for deres forvaltning samt de enkeltpersoner og familier, de var bekymrede for. Alle fik mulighed for at komme med input til, hvordan de bedst kunne velsigne dem, de drøftede. Der blev lavet planer og uddelegeret opgaver. Hvilken vidunderlig lektion i at tælle og tage vare på hver person ved navn fra disse brødre og søstre, der er første generation i kirken.

I Jesu Kristi Kirke har vi fået vejledning af fortidens og nutidens profeter – og af det mønster, som vores Frelser har sat – om, hvordan vi skal udøve tjeneste. Vi opskriver navne, vi husker, og vi rådfører os med hinanden om sjæles velfærd. Ledere, der gør dette, vil aldrig løbe tør for punkter til dagsordenen for deres rådsmøder! Princippet om at tælle og varetage virker. Det er Herrens måde. Vi kan gøre det bedre. For Gud, der skabte universet og hersker over alle ting, er dette værk – hans gerning og herlighed – meget personligt. Og det bør det også være for hver af os som redskaber i hans hænder i hans storslåede arbejde med frelse og ophøjelse. Dette vil resultere i mirakler i virkelige menneskers liv. I Jesu Kristi navn. Amen.