

Prophets Are about Miracles

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Presiding Bishop

Good morning, brothers and sisters. Sister Pearce, as you so tenderly spoke of your father, I was reminded of his words in the October 2004 general conference: “As a father, do I love my daughters less than I love my sons? No. If I am guilty of any imbalance, it is in favor of my girls. I have said that when a man gets old he had better have daughters about him. They are so kind and good and thoughtful. I think I can say that my sons are able and wise. My daughters are clever and kind. And ‘my cup runneth over’ (Psalm 23:5) because of this” (“The Women in Our Lives,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 85).

Virginia, you and your siblings, along with the grandchildren, collectively stand at the apex of the many earthly accomplishments of your loving and justifiably proud father and mother. May the Lord’s tender mercies be showered upon each of you at this time of loss.

Upon my being informed of his passing, my unprepared emotions found me standing in a darkened room with tears of sadness rolling down my face, soon to be replaced

with sweet tears of joy. I suspect many of you stepped foot on that same emotional roller coaster.

The young people of the Church have a great affinity for President Hinckley. He has been *their* prophet for most of *their* lives. He was *their* hero. To use *their* vernacular, he was awesome! He connected! Because of him, they know what it means to “stand a little taller,” “do your best,” “raise the bar,” and what the “six B’s” are: Be grateful, Be smart, Be clean, Be true, Be humble, Be prayerful.

Within a few minutes of President Hinckley’s passing, the airwaves containing the text messages of hundreds of thousands of youth were circling the planet conveying their feelings of sorrow and loss. Suggestions for Sunday dress at school, along with expressions of respect and love, continue. Thank you, dear young people. You have led the way in honoring and eulogizing our dear prophet.

Bishop Edgley, Bishop McMullin, and I have been tutored weekly by our beloved prophet and his loyal counselors. We were present when President Hinckley was advised that President Howard W. Hunter had

passed away. We noted his countenance as the announcement was made. We sensed and witnessed the mantle of senior Apostle squarely settle upon his shoulders. We have been privileged to “operationalize” a number of his inspired endeavors. Thank you, President Hinckley, for your love, your confidence, your direction, and your inspiration.

The media has well chronicled the accomplishments of President Hinckley. Each of the latter-day prophets has left a unique legacy. When I think of President McKay, I think of family and his great love for his sweet Emma Ray. With President Smith, doctrine and gospel knowledge come quickly to mind. For me, President Lee represents compassion and correlation. President Kimball connotes repentance and conferral

of the priesthood to all worthy males. President Benson makes me think of his warning to beware of pride and his counsel to study the Book of Mormon. For President Hunter, temple worthiness was paramount. With President Hinckley, there are so many significant accomplishments. Perhaps time will help sort them out for each of us.

One of the last meetings President Hinckley conducted was of the board of directors for the Perpetual Education Fund. As the status of the fund was reviewed, President Hinckley exclaimed, “This is remarkable.” And then after a brief pause he said, “It is a miracle.” President Hinckley was about miracles. He knew that breaking the cycle of poverty in developing countries was critically important to full participation in the gospel of Jesus Christ and its attendant

blessings. Generations yet to come will be blessed by this legacy.

I once attended a meeting in President Hinckley’s office which was enlivened by some post-business reminiscing between Elder David B. Haight and President Hinckley. These 90-plus-year-olds engaged in a session of “Do you remember when?”

After some remembrances were shared, Elder Haight inquired, “President Hinckley, how many temples have you either dedicated or participated in their dedication or rededication?” President Hinckley began to identify each of the then 47 operating temples. My memory is that he had a part in the dedications of 30 of the 47. He then said, “My, I would love to be alive when the 100th temple is dedicated.” Later he repeated this statement to the Brethren in the temple. Soon his desire was to have 100 operating temples before the beginning of the next century—January 2001. By 1998, 51 temples were operating. In 1999, 15 more were dedicated, and in the year 2000, 34, with the Boston temple being number 100. Later this month, temple 125 will be dedicated in Rexburg, Idaho. A miracle? I think so! Prophets are about miracles.

On July 24, 1997, President Hinckley broke ground for this Conference Center. In describing this building in the October 1998 general conference, he said the following: “It will be primarily a house of worship. But it will also be a place of art. There

Members of the Church and others stand in line outside the Conference Center for President Hinckley’s viewing, held on January 31 and February 1.





will be concerts and other public offerings that will be uplifting and wholesome and spiritual. . . . It will be a gift to the Master, whose birth we will commemorate at that season” (“Welcome to Conference,” *Liabona*, Jan. 1999, 4; *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 4).

As construction progressed, the Presiding Bishopric sought President Hinckley’s wishes on specifications. He wanted the exterior material to be Little Cottonwood granite. Many years before, Brigham Young had described Little Cottonwood granite as the finest material the Rocky Mountains could provide. As obstacles were encountered with harvesting the granite, we approached the First Presidency to see if they would consent to an alternative material. We were politely but firmly told that a way would be provided if we were but prayerful and persistent. In short, we *were* and we *did!* Long live this legacy as a memorial to his vision.

President Hinckley created a bridge to the community. Mr. Keith Rattie, CEO of Questar, said this week: “A few

years ago, the business community celebrated President Hinckley as ‘A Giant in Our City.’ In truth he was much more than that. He was a giant worldwide.” Lane Beattie, president of the Salt Lake Chamber, said in part: “His energy in service, love for life, and commitment to goodness transformed us and contributed to the betterment of this world” (“Standing Tall for Our Community: Statement on President Hinckley’s Passing,” www.saltlakechamber.org/newsroom/position-statements). A giant? Yes, a prophetic giant!

What will we remember about this beloved prophet, and what will be his lasting legacy? There is much to remember and many accomplishments to list, but I will remember his nearly 50 years of devoted, faithful service as apostle, prophet, seer, and revelator. He testified of Christ on all the populated continents, in small towns and large cities, standing on boxes in Hyde Park and via large electronic networks. He offered hope to the poor and the weary and counseled

those who needed to reach out a little more to their neighbors.

The opening hymn was the product of two young men who served as companions in the mission field. They both later served as General Authorities. The music is by Elder G. Homer Durham, and the text is by President Gordon B. Hinckley. The text expresses the strong, vibrant testament of President Hinckley:

*I know that my Redeemer lives,
Triumphant Savior, Son of God,
Victorious over pain and death,
My King, my Leader, and my Lord.*

*He lives, my one sure rock of faith,
The one bright hope of men on
earth,
The beacon to a better way,
The light beyond the veil of death.*

*Oh, give me thy sweet Spirit still,
The peace that comes alone from
thee,*

*The faith to walk the lonely road
That leads to thine eternity.*

(“My Redeemer Lives,” *Hymns*,
no. 135)

Brothers and sisters, may we all follow his often-given counsel to “do and be the best we can” and “stand a little taller”! Family, with quiet dignity, you have endured well the sacrifice of sharing your father with all of us. Please accept our thanks. May God comfort, bless, and keep each of you until you meet him again. In the holy name of our Savior and Redeemer, even Jesus Christ, amen. ■