

GRANDPA, FATHER

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Church Publishing Services

Picture 3,000 missionaries gathered in a large room. Two thousand nine hundred ninety-nine of them are talking excitedly and looking toward the same spot in the room. Some are on their tiptoes. Some are jumping to snatch quick glances over those on tiptoes. Some are standing on folding chairs. One missionary is sitting on a folding chair, elbows on his knees, hands clasped, head bowed.

That might not be exactly what happened, but that's how I remember it. That was how I felt. I was that one missionary.

As you picture the scene, you might think I was lonely or sad. Actually, I was experiencing one of the happiest moments of my life—a moment that I have been glad to relive many times since then.

I was at the missionary training center in Provo, Utah, preparing to serve as a full-time missionary in the Ecuador Quito Mission. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), who was then First Counselor in the



First Presidency, came to speak to all the missionaries in the MTC.

It was after the meeting that the hubbub began. I noticed that people weren't filing to the doors, so I asked another elder what was going on.

"President Hinckley's grandson is here at the MTC," he said, "and President Hinckley just left the stand to give him a hug!"

With that explanation, the elder stepped onto his chair to get a better view, exclaiming, "Wow! Wouldn't it be great to have President Hinckley as a grandpa?"

I loved and respected President Hinckley, and I had been inspired by his message that day. But in that moment I was struck by a thought that led me to sit on my chair rather than stand on it. In the middle of all that cheerful enthusiasm, I sat still and thought, "I'm sure it would be great to have President Hinckley as a grandpa. But I wouldn't trade my Grandpa Felt or my Grandpa West for him." I lifted my head and felt the warm embrace of gratitude as I reflected on my heritage, my family.

Then another thought came, more powerful than the first: "Besides, I am a son of God." I knew that I, a grandson of a dentist and a factory supervisor, had just as much worth as a grandson of a prophet. Why? The two of us had the same Father in Heaven.

The other 2,999 missionaries eventually walked toward the doors of that large room. I joined them, more prepared to serve the Lord than I had been a few minutes earlier. ■