

Heeding the Voice of the Prophets

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What a joy and privilege it is to be part of this worldwide Church and be taught and uplifted by prophets, seers, and revelators! We members of this Church speak many languages, and we come from many cultures, but we share the same blessings of the gospel.

This is truly a universal Church, with members spread across the nations of the earth proclaiming the universal message of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all, irrespective of language, race, or ethnic roots. We are all spirit children of a living and loving God, our Heavenly Father, who wants us to be successful on our journey back to Him.

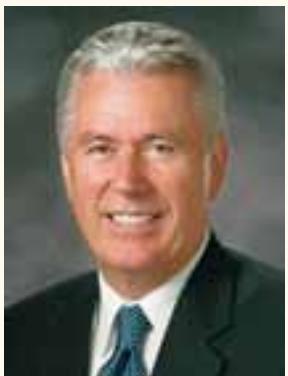
In His kindness, He has given us prophets to teach us His eternal truths and guide us in living His gospel. This year we have bade farewell to a beloved prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), who led us for many years until the Lord called him home. Now we go forward under the direction of the new prophet whom the Lord has called to lead us, President Thomas S. Monson. In our Father's great love for us, He has given us prophets for our time to lead us in an unbroken succession since the Restoration of this great work through the Prophet Joseph Smith in the early 1800s. We

will always cherish our memories of the early Saints—their sacrifices, sorrows, and tears but also their courage, faith, and trust in the Lord as they too followed His prophet in their time.

I have no ancestors among the nineteenth-century pioneers. However, since the first days of my Church membership, I have felt a close kinship to those early pioneers who crossed the plains. They are my spiritual ancestry, as they are for each and every member of the Church, regardless of nationality, language, or culture. They established not only a safe place in the West but also a spiritual foundation for the building of the kingdom of God in all the nations of the world.

We All Are Pioneers

As the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is now being embraced around the world, we are all pioneers in our own sphere and circumstance. It was in the turmoil of post–World War II Germany when my family first learned about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. George Albert Smith (1870–1951) was the President then. I was only a young child, and we had lost all material belongings twice within



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only seven years. We were refugees with an uncertain future. However, during those same seven years, we gained more than any amount of money could ever buy. We found a supernal refuge, a place of defense from despair: the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and His Church, led by a true and living prophet.

The good news that Jesus Christ has made the perfect Atonement for mankind, redeeming all from the grave and rewarding each individual according to his or her works, was the healing power which brought hope and peace back into my life.

Whatever our challenges in life may be, our burdens may become light if we not only believe in Christ but also in His ability and His power to cleanse and console our lives. Our lives are healed as we accept His peace.

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) was the prophet during my teenage years. I seemed to know him personally. I could feel his love, kindness, and dignity; he gave me confidence and courage in my young life. Even though I grew up thousands of miles away in Europe, I felt he trusted me, and I did not want to disappoint him.

Another source of strength was a letter written by the Apostle Paul while he was in prison, addressed to Timothy, his most trusted assistant and friend. He wrote:

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” (2 Timothy 1:7–8).

These words from one of the ancient Apostles of our Savior rang with great importance for me in postwar

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times, even as they do today. Yet how many of us permit our fears to take control of our lives in this time of international tension, economic and political uncertainties, and personal challenges?

A Consistent Voice

God is speaking to us in a consistent voice. God will deal with all the human family equally. We might be in a large ward or a small branch, our climate or vegetation may differ, the cultural background and language might vary, and the color of our skin could be totally different. But the universal power and blessings of the restored gospel are available to all, irrespective of culture, nationality, political system, tradition, language, economic environment, or education.

Today, we have again apostles, seers, and revelators who are watchmen on the tower, messengers of supernal, healing truth. God speaks to us through them. They are profoundly aware of the different circumstances we members are living in. They are in this world but not of this world. They point the way, and they offer help for our difficulties, not through the wisdom of this world but from an eternal Source.

Only a few years ago, in a First Presidency Message, President Thomas S. Monson said: “The problems of our day loom ominously before us. Surrounded by the sophistication of modern living, we look heavenward for that unfailing sense of direction, that we might chart and follow a wise and proper course. He whom we call our Heavenly Father will not leave our sincere petition unanswered.”¹

We have a living prophet on the face of the earth again, even President Thomas S. Monson. He knows our challenges and fears. He has inspired answers. There is no need to fear. We can have peace in our hearts and peace in our homes. We can each be an influence for good in this world by following the commandments of God and relying on true repentance, the power of the Atonement, and the miracle of forgiveness.

The prophets speak to us in the name of the Lord and in divine plainness. As the Book of Mormon confirms, “For the Lord God giveth light unto the understanding; for he speaketh unto men according to their language, unto their understanding” (2 Nephi 31:3).

It is our responsibility not only to listen but also to act upon His word that we may claim the blessings of the ordinances and covenants of the restored gospel. He said, “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10).

There may be times when we feel overwhelmed, hurt, or on the edge of discouragement as we are trying so hard to be perfect members of the Church. Be assured, there is balm in Gilead. Let us listen to the prophets of our day as they help us to focus on the things that are central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children. The Lord knows us, He loves us, He wants us to succeed, and He encourages us by saying: “And see that all . . . things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that [men or women] should run faster than [they have] strength. . . . [But] it is expedient that [they] should be diligent” (Mosiah 4:27).

Following Their Counsel

Are we diligent in living the commandments of God, without running beyond our strength? Or are we just leisurely strolling along? Are we using our time, talents, and means wisely? Are we focused on the things which matter most? Are we following the inspired counsel of the prophets?

One example of great importance for humanity is strengthening our own families. The principle of family home evening was given to us in 1915. President McKay reminded parents again in 1964 that “no other success can compensate for failure in the home.”² In 1995 the prophets of our day called upon all the world to strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.³ And in 1999 the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles lovingly stated: “We counsel parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However

worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform.”⁴

Let us in humility and faith refresh our dedication and our commitment to follow the prophets, seers, and revelators in all diligence. Let us listen and be instructed and edified by those who hold all the keys of the kingdom. And as we listen and follow them, may our hearts be changed that there will be a great desire to do good (see Alma 19:33). Thus we will be pioneers in building a spiritual foundation that will establish the Church in every part of the world, that the gospel of Jesus Christ may become a blessing for each child of God and unite and strengthen our families. ■

NOTES

1. “Sailing Safely the Seas of Life,” *Liahona*, Nov. 1999, 6–7; *Ensign*, July 1999, 5.
2. Quoted from J. E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* (1924), 42; in Conference Report, Apr. 1964, 5.
3. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
4. “Letter from the First Presidency,” *Liahona*, Dec. 1999, 1; “Keeping Children Close to the Church,” *Ensign*, June 1999, 80.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After prayerfully studying this message, share it using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. Following are some examples:

1. Ask children what they would need if they were in some distant place and needed to travel back home. Suggest how a map and a guide might help. Explain that prophets are guides Heavenly Father provides to help us get back to Him. Read an excerpt from the message that emphasizes this point.
2. Relate a memory you have of the man who was President of the Church when you were a child or teenager. Tell how the teachings of the living prophets have guided you during your lifetime.