

# ELDER QUENTIN L. COOK

On October 6, 2007, Elder Quentin L. Cook was sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles after serving as a Seventy for 11 years. He fills the vacancy left by President Henry B. Eyring, who was called to be the Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

Born in Logan, Utah, on September 8, 1940, Elder Cook was one of three children born to Bernice and J. Vernon Cook. In high school he was quarterback on the football team and earned all-region honors in both football and basketball. He also served as senior class president and participated in debate.

When he was 15, a defining moment came when his older brother, Joe, was deciding whether to go to medical school or serve a mission. The two of them stayed up one night discussing what Joe should do. Elder Cook has said of this experience:



“That evening was one of the most important times in my life. After Joe and I finished talking, I went into another room and prayed about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I got a very strong feeling that the things Joe and I had been talking about were true.

“Joe chose to serve a mission, and a few years later, I followed in his footsteps, serving in the British Mission.”<sup>1</sup> And Joe later did attend medical school.

Missionary work is near and dear to Elder Cook’s heart

today as well. He has served in Area Presidencies in the Philippines and the Pacific islands, and he has spent the last several years working with the Church’s Missionary Department, including overseeing the preparation and implementation of *Preach My Gospel*. He has said:

“Missionary work is not just one of the 88 keys on

a piano that is occasionally played; it is a major chord in a compelling melody that needs to be played continuously throughout our lives if we are to remain in harmony with our commitment to Christianity and the gospel of Jesus Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

After his mission, he married his high school sweetheart, Mary Gaddie, in the Logan Temple. He received a bachelor's degree in political science from Utah State University and then left Logan for California to study law at Stanford University. He and his family spent the next 33 years in California, where he served in various Church callings, including president of the California San Francisco Stake.

After earning his law degree, he applied for a job at a law firm and was invited to lunch by some of the partners at the firm. The senior partner asked him if he would like an alcoholic drink before lunch and later asked him if he would like wine. Elder Cook declined both times, telling him the second time that he was a Latter-day Saint. This incident was more important than Elder Cook thought at the time. He has said:

“I received an offer of employment from the firm. A few months later, the senior partner told me the offer of the alcoholic beverages was a test. He noted that my résumé made it clear that I had served an LDS mission. He had determined that he would hire me only if I was true to the teachings of my own church. He considered it a significant matter of character and integrity.”<sup>3</sup>

Elder Cook learned at a young age that such seemingly small acts are every bit as important as any large deed. He recalls:

“When I was young, I . . . wanted to prove myself through some heroic gesture. My great-grandfather David Patten Kimball

was one of the young men who helped carry the members of the Martin handcart company across the Sweetwater River. That sounded like the kind of consecration for which I was looking. Later, as I visited with my grandfather Crozier Kimball, he explained that when President Brigham Young sent the men on their rescue mission, he instructed them to do everything they possibly could to save the handcart company. Their consecration was specifically to ‘follow the prophet.’ My grandfather told me that consistent,

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faithful dedication to one's duty or to a principle is to be much admired. As heroic as it was for David Patten Kimball to help rescue the pioneers, it might be equally heroic today to follow the prophet by not watching immoral movies or by refraining from using vulgar language.”<sup>4</sup>

The things Elder Cook has experienced have built his testimony of Jesus Christ and have prepared him to be a special witness of the Savior in all the world. **NE**

#### NOTES

1. “Friend to Friend,” *Friend*, June 1999, 7.
2. “Be a Missionary All Your Life,” *Brigham Young University 2006–2007 Speeches* [2007], 7.
3. “Lessons from the Old Testament: In the World but Not of the World,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2006, 54.
4. “Looking beyond the Mark,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2003, 40–44.