

David O. McKay

President of the Church, 1951–70

“Every member a missionary,” taught President McKay (in Conference Report, Apr. 1959, 121–22). The Church accelerated its missionary work under his direction.

He championed the family and the home, reminding us that “no other success can compensate for failure in the home” (quoted from J. E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* [1924], 42; in Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 116).

He often quoted, “To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved” (*Gospel Ideals* [1953], 187).

“Next to the bestowal of life itself, the right to direct that life is God’s greatest gift to man” (*Gospel Ideals*, 299).

Although he valued education highly, he said, “Character is higher than intellect” (*Gospel Ideals*, 443).

President McKay explained the importance of good works: “Spirituality is best manifested in doing, not in dreaming. Rapturous day dreams, flights of heavenly fancy, longings to see the invisible, are not so impressive as the plain doing of duty” (*True to the Faith*, comp. Llewelyn R. McKay [1966], 244–45).

1873 Born on September 8 in Huntsville, Utah, to David McKay and Jennette Evans McKay

1881 Age 8, baptized in Spring Creek, Huntsville, Utah, on his birthday while his father served a mission to Great Britain

1897–99 Ages 24–26, serves a mission to Scotland

1901 Age 27, marries Emma Ray Riggs, his college sweetheart, on January 2; she dies in 1970

1906 Age 32, ordained an Apostle by President Joseph F. Smith on April 9

1920–21 Ages 47–48, visits Church missions worldwide; dedicates the land of China to missionary work

1922–24 Ages 49–51, serves as president of the European Mission

1934 Age 61, called as a counselor to President Heber J. Grant; later called as a counselor to President George Albert Smith (1945)

1951 Age 77, sustained as President of the Church on April 9, with Stephen L Richards and J. Reuben Clark Jr. as counselors

1955 Age 82, dedicates the Bern Switzerland Temple on September 11

1956 Age 82, dedicates the Los Angeles California Temple on March 11

1958 Age 84, dedicates the Hamilton New Zealand Temple on April 20 and the London England Temple on September 7

1964 Age 91, dedicates the Oakland California Temple on November 17

1970 Age 96, dies on January 18 in Salt Lake City after serving almost 64 years as a General Authority, longer than any other man, and nearly 19 years as President of the Church

Summary

David O. McKay, ninth President of the Church, encouraged missionary work when he said, “Every member a missionary.” He also taught the

importance of home and family by saying that having a righteous family is the best success we can have in this life.

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS