

In Memoriam:
President Gordon B. Hinckley
1910–2008

A supplement to the *Ensign*

President Gordon B. Hinckley

The nations of the earth have heard his voice.



On August 20, 1935, President Heber J. Grant and his counselors, J. Reuben Clark Jr. and David O. McKay, met with an unusual young man recently home from a mission in England. While serving in the European Mission office in London, the young man had worked well with the media, helping create positive publicity for the Church and helping write effective proselytizing literature. The First Presidency obviously perceived something remarkable in 25-year-old Gordon Hinckley; his 15-minute appointment lasted more than an hour. Two days later they asked him to come to work for the Church as secretary of the newly organized Radio, Publicity, and Mission Literature Committee.

Gordon Bitner Hinckley's errand with the Lord and His Church had only begun. Initially as a Church employee, then an assistant to the Twelve and an Apostle, a counselor to three Church Presidents, and, ultimately, President, he labored at bringing The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints "out of obscurity and out of darkness" (D&C 1:30) to become as a "city that is set on an hill" (Matthew 5:14) with its lights shining before men. Taking his trademark optimism, compassion, wisdom, and sense of humor with him across the globe, President Hinckley met not only with Latter-day Saints but also with local journalists, heads of state, and television reporters. His administration as Church President was characterized by openness to the media, unprecedented Church growth and temple

construction, and concern for the problems facing people everywhere.

In spite of all the places he went, the people he met, and the publicity he brought to the Church, President Hinckley tried to live humbly and inconspicuously. He made choices not to impress others but to follow spiritual promptings. A quiet reverence for his Father in Heaven, for his ancestors and their sacrifices, and for spiritual and secular knowledge guided the 15th prophet of the restored Church.

A House of Learning

Born into a religiously dedicated and culturally refined family on June 23, 1910, Gordon Bitner Hinckley was the first son of Ada Bitner and Bryant Stringham Hinckley, educators who met while Bryant served as president of LDS Business College and Ada taught English and shorthand. Bryant's first wife, Christine, had died, leaving him with eight children. He and Ada successfully combined those children with five more of their own.

Growing up in a home with a library filled with more than a thousand volumes of literary, historical, and philosophical works enabled Gordon to become a voracious reader. He had an appetite for knowledge that was never satisfied even into adulthood.

But his childhood consisted of more than books and studying. The family purchased a small farm in the then-rural area of East Millcreek, outside Salt Lake City, in the



President Hinckley enjoyed gathering with his family; he is shown above with his wife, Marjorie, and some of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. One hallmark of his administration was involvement in the daily work of the Church, whether inspecting the Monticello Utah Temple construction (far left) or traveling to Honduras to meet with members in the aftermath of a hurricane (left).

hopes of strengthening Gordon's weak constitution. There, in the summer, Gordon slept outside under a country sky full of stars, drank milk fresh from the cow, and learned important lessons, such as "the skill of pruning trees in January so they would bear beautiful fruit in September."¹

Love, respect, and family home evenings all united the large family.

As a boy Gordon received his patriarchal blessing. It proved prophetic in saying that he would "become a mighty and valiant leader in the midst of Israel. . . . Thou shalt ever be a

messenger of peace; the nations of the earth shall hear thy voice and be brought to a knowledge of the truth by the wonderful testimony which thou shalt bear."²

Praise to the Man

Adolescence brought several spiritual experiences to a maturing Gordon Hinckley, including a particularly powerful one he would remember for the rest of his life. Somewhat reluctant to go to his first stake priesthood meeting as a deacon, Gordon nevertheless accompanied his father, who sat on the stand

TRIBUTES TO PRESIDENT HINCKLEY

He had the heart of a servant, the wisdom of a leader.

News of the death of President Gordon B. Hinckley evoked an outpouring of condolences and tributes from all over the world. Below is a sampling of the many expressions of love and admiration paid to him.

President George W. Bush, United States of America: Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of our friend Gordon B. Hinckley. . . . [He] demonstrated the heart of a servant and the wisdom of a leader. . . . I was honored to present him with the Medal of Freedom, our nation's highest civil award, in recognition of his lifelong public service. . . . Our thoughts and prayers are with his five children and the rest of the Hinckley family.

Bishop Carolyn Tanner Irish, Episcopal Diocese of Utah: I find it difficult to imagine the world and its faith communities without him. Leading the LDS Church for decades, he has been its heart and soul to many millions—members and nonmembers alike. Like so many others, I have been deeply touched by his generous wisdom, kindly voice, and delicate humor.

Jeanetta Williams, President, NAACP of Utah, Nevada, and Idaho: I want to convey my deepest, heartfelt sympathy to President Hinckley's family and to Church members. I was very fond of President Hinckley. I personally knew him, and I will truly miss his voice and his concern for the community.

Larry King, Larry King Live, CNN: President Hinckley was more than a leader of a church; he was a great friend. I have met very few people in my life who had his

passion, his understanding, or his wisdom. He will be sorely missed.

President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, Iceland: With the death of President Gordon B. Hinckley, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the entire world have lost a great and wise leader, a man of vision and courage. The people of Iceland have lost a good friend, and I offer the Church of Jesus Christ our sincere condolences.

Dr. Hussein Hassouna, Ambassador of the League of Arab States to the United States: It is with great regret that I learned about the passing away of Gordon B. Hinckley, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I still remember meeting him during my visit to Salt Lake City a couple of years ago. I was impressed by his knowledge, wisdom, and interest in world affairs.

Zamira Sydykova, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United States and Canada: Mr. Hinckley was a great . . . person who made Mormonism more familiar to the globe and promoted civility and mutual respect among people everywhere.

Yuval Rotem, Ambassador, Embassy of Israel in Australia: I join with millions of people around the world to honor and grieve for this compassionate and benevolent man. . . . President Hinckley impressed me as a strong leader with an ability to understand the most crucial points of any issue. I greatly appreciate his significant

efforts in bringing Christians and Jews closer together.

To view or listen to the talks from President Gordon B. Hinckley's memorial service, go to www.lds.org/presidenthinckleymemorial.

TEENS HONOR PRESIDENT HINCKLEY

Cell phones throughout the world spread the news of the passing of our beloved prophet Gordon B. Hinckley on Sunday evening, January 27. Within hours additional text messages filled the airwaves with teens encouraging each other to dress in their Sunday best instead of casual clothes for school the following day in honor of President Hinckley.

One surprised parent in Mesa, Arizona, found her daughter up early and ironing a skirt for Monday's day at school. She said after her daughter, Mackenzie, received many text messages, she and her friends decided to wear church clothes to school in honor of the prophet. So did thousands of others.

President Hinckley's grandson, James Pearce, explained his understanding of why so many youth wore their best clothing to school: "He loved the youth so much, and they felt that love. They acknowledged it with their behavior."

That same spirit was exhibited along the route from the memorial services to the cemetery, as youth and adults waved white handkerchiefs and held up canes as a farewell to the prophet.

as a member of the stake presidency. Any feelings of reluctance immediately dissipated as the words to the opening hymn sank into his soul: “Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah! Jesus anointed that Prophet and Seer.”³ He later recalled: “Something happened within me as I heard those men of faith sing. . . . There came into my heart a conviction that the man of whom they sang was really a prophet of God.”⁴

A Friendship with Marjorie

Gordon graduated from LDS High School in 1928, eager to begin study at the University of Utah and also eager to pursue a courtship with a young woman across the street. They had known each other since childhood. The two began socializing at ward activities. Although Gordon Hinckley described himself as “a shy and bashful boy—freckle-faced and awkward,”⁵ Marjorie Pay considered him the life of the party. “He was always full of enthusiasm,” she said. “When Gordon would enter the room, my friends would excitedly tell me, ‘He’s here!’”⁶

Marjorie and Gordon had developed a close friendship by the time Gordon entered the University of Utah intent on pursuing a degree in English literature. Some of his courses perhaps contributed to a sense of doubt Gordon was already experiencing as a result of the Great Depression. “It was a time of terrible discouragement, and it was felt strongly on campus,” he remembered. “I began to question some things, including perhaps in a slight measure the faith of my parents. That is not unusual for university students, but the atmosphere was particularly acute at that time. . . . The testimony which had come to me as a boy remained with me and became as a bulwark to which I could cling during those very difficult years,”⁷ he said.

“Forget Yourself and Go to Work”

Any doubts Gordon wrestled with in college never prevented him from fully participating in the Church. President



LOOK FOR THE SUNLIGHT

“I am asking that we stop seeking out the storms and enjoy more

fully the sunlight. I am suggesting that as we go through life, we ‘accentuate the positive.’ I am asking that we look a little deeper for the good. . . . Look for the sunlight through the clouds” (“The Continuing Pursuit of Truth,” Ensign, Apr. 1986, 2–4).

Hinckley said of his college days, “There was in my heart something of a love for God and his great work that carried me above any doubts and fears.”⁸

In June 1932 he received his bachelor of arts degree from the University of Utah. Undaunted by a national unemployment rate of 30 percent, Gordon planned to earn money for an ambitious goal: study at Columbia University School of Journalism in New York City.

In those days of economic despair, few young men planned on serving missions, and few families could afford the expense. Thus it was with surprise that Gordon heard his bishop ask him if he would consider going on a mission. Gordon accepted the call. Ultimately, Gordon’s mother, Ada, who had died of cancer in 1930, made his mission a financial possibility. The family discovered a savings account she had built up with the change from her groceries, intending to use it someday for her sons’ missions. It enabled Gordon to set out for London in 1933.

A pivotal spiritual experience soon followed. President Hinckley would refer to it again and again as “my day of decision. . . . Everything good that has happened to me since then I can trace back to [it].”⁹ Discouraged over preaching to uninterested audiences and knocking on unopened doors, Gordon wrote his father: “I am wasting my time and



Above: As a missionary (third from left) in the British Isles during the 1930s. Right: As a student.



your money. I don't see any point in my staying here."

Bryant Hinckley, ever the educator and wise disciplinarian, replied: "Dear Gordon. I have your letter. . . . I have only one suggestion. Forget yourself and go to work. With love, Your Father." Letter in hand, Gordon returned to his apartment contemplating the verse he had studied in scripture study that morning: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it" (Mark 8:35). "I got on my knees," he recalled, "and made a covenant with the Lord that I would try to forget myself and go to work."¹⁰

In 1934 he was called to serve as an assistant to Elder Joseph F. Merrill of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and president of the European Mission. Gordon wrote articles that were printed in the Church publication *Millennial Star* and, even more important for missionary work, in the *London Monthly Pictorial* magazine. President Merrill's confidence in the young missionary ran so high that he sent Elder Hinckley to converse with the head of a large publishing company responsible for a book containing falsehoods about the Church. The meeting resulted in the company's including a disclaimer in the book from that point on.

Media Career

Because Gordon had successfully communicated with the English press, President Merrill asked him to convey to the First Presidency the European Mission's need for more and better materials. Although he still hoped to enter Columbia University, Gordon Hinckley could not hide his talents from the First Presidency. His interview with them resulted in his job as secretary of the Radio, Publicity, and Mission Literature Committee.

From 1935 to 1958, as a Church employee, Gordon Hinckley wrote numerous gospel tracts,



THE FOCUS OF OUR FAITH

"Like the polar star in the heavens, regardless of what the future

holds, there stands the Redeemer of the world, the Son of God, certain and sure as the anchor of our immortal lives. He is the rock of our salvation, our strength, our comfort, the very focus of our faith" (*"We Look to Christ," Liahona, July 2002, 101; Ensign, May 2002, 90*).

authored missionary books, produced radio programs, supervised those who translated the Book of Mormon from English to other languages, and oversaw the Church exhibit for the 1939 San Francisco World's Fair. He also pioneered the use of audiovisual materials in missionary work, leading to their use in temples and Church exhibits. Those years of Church service were broken only by a short stint during World War II when he worked in a management position with the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad in Denver, Colorado.

Gordon's years as a Church employee also included managing and preserving the missionary program during the Korean War and producing the temple film, first used in the Bern Switzerland Temple because it served a multilingual audience.

Another House of Learning

Gordon married his neighbor, friend, and sweetheart, Marjorie Pay, in the Salt Lake Temple on April 29, 1937.

Their family grew to include three daughters and two sons: Kathleen (Barnes Walker), Richard Gordon, Virginia (Pearce), Clark Bryant, and Jane (Dudley). The family vacationed throughout the United States, read and discussed good books, and enjoyed humorous discussions around the dinner table.

Gordon's parenting style mirrored that of his own father: calm, practical, and not prone to harsh disciplinary measures. Neither parent pressured the children into righteous behavior. When



For many years Gordon Hinckley was employed in producing written and broadcast material for the Church.

Richard underwent typical questioning and doubts as a teenager, his father's example made the greatest impression. "Dad was like an anchor," he said. "In my heart I knew *he* knew the gospel was true. . . . God was real and personal to him."¹¹

The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Gordon Hinckley's job required that he consult regularly with the Brethren. When President McKay asked him to come to his office during the general conference weekend in April 1958, Gordon assumed that the President needed him for something work related. Instead, President McKay asked him to serve as a General Authority. Feeling surprised and overwhelmed, Gordon Bitner Hinckley was sustained as an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve on April 6, 1958.

In 1960 General Authorities were assigned responsibility for large areas of the world, and one of the most difficult assignments went to Elder Hinckley: Asia. The area was huge, and complex and varied languages challenged the missionaries. Political unrest complicated matters. Elder Hinckley labored throughout the vast continent to develop local leadership, encourage missionaries, and find property for chapels in real estate markets with exorbitant prices. The Asian people, in turn, grew to love him for his willingness to walk the streets, ride public transport, and eat native food. One Japanese Church leader said that Elder Hinckley talked and listened as though he were Asian himself.¹²

Elder Hinckley continued to labor in Asia even after the momentous Saturday, September 30, 1961, when he was sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "It was a sobering thing," President



Hinckley said. "Such a call brings with it a tremendous sense of responsibility and duty to bear witness of the Lord."¹³ Members worldwide soon discovered for themselves the spiritual, humorous, and insightful speaking approach that marked Elder Hinckley's tenure. His stirring messages transcended cultures and borders by combining strength, tenderness, and self-deprecation in a way that moved dignitaries and common folk alike.



As a member of the Twelve, Elder Hinckley oversaw the work in South America and then Europe. Administering and speaking often took up less of his time than did offering compassionate service and humanitarian aid. In 1970, for example, Elder Hinckley's plane had just departed from

Above: Elder Gordon B. Hinckley (seventh from left) as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the early 1970s. Left: Gordon Hinckley (far right) as a member of a stake presidency in the 1950s with the visiting President of the Church, David O. McKay. Below: With visitors in his office in the Church Administration Building.

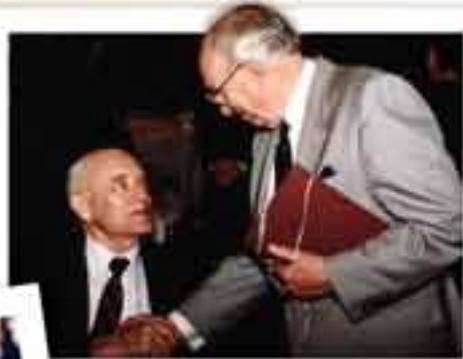




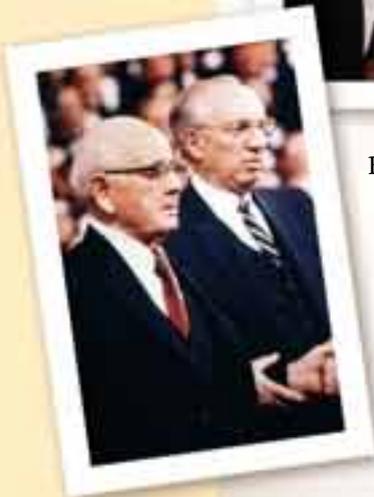
President Hinckley served as a counselor to three Church Presidents: Ezra Taft Benson (above), 1985–94; Howard W. Hunter (right), 1994–95; and Spencer W. Kimball (below), 1981–85. President Hinckley made friends of dignitaries and notable people such as reporter Mike Wallace (opposite page).

Lima, Peru, when a devastating earthquake struck the country. Upon hearing the news in Chile, he dropped his scheduled meetings and returned to Peru, where he and the mission president located missionaries and members, coordinated relief efforts, and traveled to devastated villages to offer comfort.

As a General Authority, Elder Hinckley served on numerous committees, including General Priesthood, Church Correlation, and



Budget and Appropriations. But some of his greatest contributions came, predictably, in public communications with the press and the world at large. He continued developing Church materials for the media and constantly looked for better ways to use technology in communicating with



Latter-day Saints around the world. When controversial issues arose, Elder Hinckley was called upon to articulate Church positions to the media. “Brother Hinckley . . . rather enjoyed difficult assignments and was not shy when it came to dealing with foes of the Church,”¹⁴ explained President Thomas S. Monson.

The First Presidency

Elder Hinckley served as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles under four Presidents: David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, and Spencer W. Kimball. On July 23, 1981, he was set apart as a third counselor to an ailing President Kimball, whose counselors, Marion G. Romney and N. Eldon Tanner, also experienced ill health. Gordon B. Hinckley never again left the First Presidency. He served as a counselor to Spencer W. Kimball, to Ezra Taft Benson, and then to Howard W. Hunter. He shouldered multiple responsibilities when the health of those Presidents declined, carrying on with the work of the Church under the direction of his leader.

He later wrote: “It was an almost terrifying load at times. . . . I recall on one particular occasion getting on my knees before the Lord and asking for help in the midst of [a] very difficult situation. And there came into my mind those reassuring words, ‘Be still and know that I am God’ (D&C 101:16).”¹⁵

While he served as a counselor, significant events and changes occurred in the Church. These included the 1989 implementation of general tithes and offerings to sustain local units of the Church and the 1991 equalization of missionary contributions. In addition, he personally selected sites, oversaw designs, and

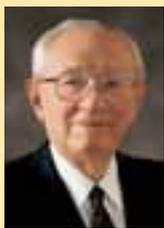
dedicated 20 temples during the 1980s.

Not all of President Hinckley's dealings with the world at large were easy. He adeptly set forth statements explaining stances on everything from same-sex marriage to gambling to Church disciplinary councils. Yet he also continued to create uplifting material, supervising the production of new temple films in the early 1990s and envisioning the story for *Legacy*, an epic film portraying the Latter-day Saint pioneer saga.

When President Benson's health began declining in the early 1990s, President Hinckley and President Thomas S. Monson shared the day-to-day burdens of the First Presidency until President Benson passed away in 1994. Together, the two counselors supported Howard W. Hunter during his tenure as 14th President of the Church until he passed away on March 3, 1995.

President Hinckley felt awestruck at the mantle of authority he was about to assume. "I had no idea how overwhelming it would feel,"¹⁶ he recalled. Early one morning, he went alone to the fourth floor of the Salt Lake Temple. After reading from the scriptures, he studied paintings in the room depicting the life of the Savior. "I was particularly impressed with the painting of the Crucifixion," he wrote. "I thought much of the price my Savior paid for my redemption. I thought of the overwhelming responsibility of standing as His prophet in the earth. I was subdued and wept over my feelings of inadequacy." Yet he left the temple that day with a powerful confirmation that "the Lord is working His will with reference to His cause and kingdom."¹⁷

President Gordon B. Hinckley was set apart on March 12, 1995, as 15th President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,



FEED THE SHEEP AND LAMBS

"Every convert is a son or daughter of God.

Every convert is a great and serious responsibility. It is an absolute imperative that we look after those who have become a part of us. . . . I am convinced that we will lose but very, very few of those who come into the Church if we take better care of them" ("Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," Liahona, July 1999, 122-23; Ensign, May 1999, 108-9).

with Thomas S. Monson as First Counselor and James E. Faust as Second Counselor. They would serve together for more than a dozen years, until President Faust passed away in August 2007. President Henry B. Eyring was sustained as Second Counselor in the First Presidency on October 6, 2007, at general conference.

An Outreach to the World

President Hinckley's openness to the media served the cause in which he had been involved since accepting a job with the Church in 1935. Now he would bring to fruition his legacy of bringing the Church "out of obscurity"

(D&C 1:30). Truly, he accomplished it, letting the world know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not a small, provincial western-American sect.

As President, he continued to meet with world political and opinion leaders. In November 1995 President Hinckley and Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles presented U.S. president Bill Clinton and vice president Al Gore with a copy of the proclamation on the family as they met in the White House to discuss ways to strengthen families. Later as President Hinckley was interviewed on national television by *60 Minutes* reporter Mike Wallace, millions of Americans heard a living prophet bear witness of the First Vision, explain the priesthood, and discuss other gospel fundamentals. Through the years he went on to speak to numerous business, political, and historical groups. Among them were the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the General Society of Mayflower Descendants, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. He was a guest several times on the cable television show *Larry King Live*.

President Hinckley began the





LIVE AS TRUE FOLLOWERS

“We must live as true followers of the Christ,

with charity toward all, returning good for evil, teaching by example the ways of the Lord, and accomplishing the vast service He has outlined for us” (*“The Dawning of a Brighter Day,”* Liahona and Ensign, May 2004, 84).

twenty-first century by being the first Church President to address the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., answering questions on everything from genealogy to humanitarian efforts. He also authored several books as Church President. The first, *Standing for Something: 10 Neglected Virtues That Will Heal Our Hearts and Homes*, was released early in 2000. It made the *Publishers Weekly* top-10 list of best-selling religious books. On his 94th birthday in 2004, President Hinckley received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from U.S. president George W. Bush.

Among the Saints

President Hinckley put a priority on meeting with Latter-day Saints everywhere. “I am determined that while I have strength I will get out among the people at home and abroad,” he said during the April 1996 general conference. “I wish to mingle with the people I love.”¹⁸ Soon after being sustained as President in 1995, he departed on a trip to the British Isles, and that was just the beginning. In 1996 he mingled with members in 22 countries throughout Central and South America, Europe, and Asia, and in 13 U.S. states. He became the first Church President to visit mainland China.

In succeeding years, he kept up the pace. In January 2000, for example, he took a 23,000-mile (37,000-km), 10-day trip through the Pacific, meeting with members in Kiribati, Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Guam. In 2004 he dedicated the Accra Ghana Temple, visited Cape Verde Saints, and traveled throughout Europe. By 2005 President Hinckley had traveled more than one million miles as the Lord’s prophet, in that year alone going to Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Nigeria, and other countries.

Under President Hinckley’s direction, the Church also reached out to those in need across the globe. In 1996, for example, the Church humanitarian aid program contributed clothing for 8.7 million people in 58 countries,

one million pounds (450,000 kg) of medical and educational equipment to 70 countries, and U.S. \$3.1 million worth of food, medical supplies, and agricultural products to famine-ravaged North Korea.¹⁹ In March 2000 he announced the creation of the Perpetual Education Fund, providing loans to help young Latter-day Saints throughout the world receive the education and training necessary to find adequate employment. In 2004–05

the Church offered tremendous sustenance to victims of Southeast Asia’s tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, and numerous other natural disasters in various countries.

Building for the Future

The construction of sacred buildings played a profound role in President Hinckley’s administration. In July 1997 the prophet offered the dedicatory prayer at the groundbreaking for the new Conference Center in Salt Lake City. In April 2000 a remarkable general conference took place in the enormous edifice, which seats some 21,000 people, many of whom did not previously dare make the trip to Salt Lake City for fear of not getting seats in the Tabernacle. “I’ve been waiting for this



Above: President and Sister Hinckley visit China.



Left: Visiting members in Africa.

LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH IN AFRICA COURTESY OF DESERT MORNING NEWS; PHOTOGRAPH IN CHINA BY GERRY AVANT/CHURCH NEWS; MAY NOT BE COPIED; RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH OF PERTH AUSTRALIA TEMPLE BY ANDREW MCMAHON; INSET: PHOTOGRAPH OF NAUVOO ILLINOIS TEMPLE BY JOHN LUKE

day for nearly 50 years, since the time I joined the Church,”²⁰ said a 72-year-old Samoan member in attendance.

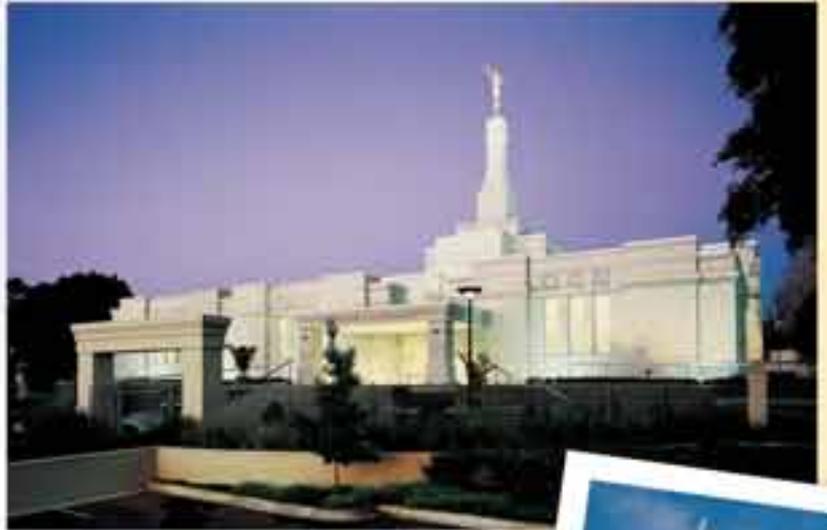
President Hinckley announced in October 1997 that the Church would begin building small temples in areas with few Church members. The plan resulted in unprecedented temple growth. More than 70 temples in 21 countries were constructed under his leadership. In October 2005 President Hinckley broke ground for the construction of a state-of-the-art Church History Library in downtown Salt Lake City, with an expected completion date of mid-2009.

President Hinckley’s efforts to build up the Church extended to using the Internet. After establishing its presence on the Internet with LDS.org, the Church launched in 1999 a family history Web site, FamilySearch.org, which received an overwhelming response from an eager general public. In 2001, Mormon.org was launched to answer questions about Church teachings. Other Internet offerings followed, designed to serve Church members and those of other faiths—such as JosephSmith.net.

An Eternal Companionship

On April 29, 2003, President Hinckley commemorated a personal milestone, his 66th wedding anniversary. As he reflected on his marriage, he concluded, “If a husband would think less of himself and more of his wife, we’d have happier homes throughout the Church and throughout the world.”²¹

Sister Hinckley died a little less than a year later, on April 6, 2004, from causes incident to age. Thousands of fellow Saints attended her funeral, while many more watched it on television. Son Clark Hinckley read from a letter his father had written to his wife: “When in



some future day the hand of death gently touches one or the other of us, there will be tears, yes, but there will also be a quiet and certain assurance of reunion and eternal companionship.”

What a Latter-day Saint Ought to Be

President Hinckley lived to serve and to sacrifice. He lived for his family and for the members of the Church, to whom he reached out in his talks and travels. Speaking to those members during general conference in October 2006, he said: “I had my 96th birthday last June. I have learned from many sources that there is considerable speculation concerning my health. I wish to put the record straight. If I last a few months longer,

Left: President Hinckley and his counselors, President Thomas S. Monson and President James E. Faust, shake hands with members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles after a session of general conference. President Hinckley inaugurated the building of small temples (top) and took great interest in the building of the restored Nauvoo Illinois Temple (above).



Gordon Hinckley and Marjorie Pay married in the Salt Lake Temple in 1937 and enjoyed 67 years of marriage.

I will have served to an older age than any previous President. I do not say this to be boastful but rather grateful.” Then he added the following characteristic comment: “The Lord has permitted me to live; I do not know for how long. But whatever the time, I shall continue to give my best to the task at hand.”²²

In August 2005 President Hinckley urged Church members to come closer to the Savior through reading the Book of Mormon by the year’s end. Already marked by celebrations commemorating the Prophet Joseph Smith’s birth 200 years earlier, 2005 took on special meaning for Church members who accepted the challenge, resulting in more people reading the Book of Mormon than at any other time in history.

President Hinckley, in his kind and gentle way, often counseled Latter-day Saints to be good examples. “Let us be good people,” he told us in an April 2001 general conference address. “Let us be friendly people. Let us be neighborly people. Let us be what members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ought to be.”²³

We wanted to do those things because we saw how he cared for others, whatever their background or religious beliefs. We saw his concern for new converts. We saw how he used his education and spirituality to speak eloquently, make wise decisions, and give the world “an example of the believers” (1 Timothy 4:12). We heard him laugh at himself and exhibit true humility, somehow living his life with both restraint and vigor. Above all, we came to understand and love Jesus Christ even more through His unforgettable 15th prophet of the latter days, Gordon Bitner Hinckley. ■

NOTES

1. Quoted in J. M. Heslop, “Hard Work and Responsibility Bring Success,” *Church News*, Feb. 8, 1975, 4.
2. Quoted in Boyd K. Packer, “President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor,” *Tambuli*, Oct.–Nov. 1986, 1; *Ensign*, Feb. 1986, 7.
3. “Praise to the Man,” *Hymns*, no. 27.
4. Quoted in Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1996), 35.
5. Quoted in Heslop, *Church News*, Feb. 8, 1975, 4.
6. Relief Society fireside, Holladay 11th Ward, Salt Lake Holladay Stake, Jan. 9, 1996.
7. Quoted in Dew, *Go Forward*, 46–47.
8. Quoted in Dew, *Go Forward*, 47.
9. Quoted in Dew, *Go Forward*, 64.
10. Quoted in Jeffrey R. Holland, “President Gordon B. Hinckley: Stalwart and Brave He Stands,” *Liabona*, June 1995 (special edition), 14; *Ensign*, June 1995, 8.
11. Quoted in Dew, *Go Forward*, 168.
12. See Dew, *Go Forward*, 248.
13. Quoted in Dew, *Go Forward*, 235.
14. Quoted in Dew, *Go Forward*, 294.
15. Quoted in Holland, *Liabona*, June 1995 (special edition), 22; *Ensign*, June 1995, 12.
16. Quoted in Dew, *Go Forward*, 506.
17. Quoted in Dew, *Go Forward*, 507–8.
18. “This Glorious Easter Morn,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 65–66.
19. See Hans Moran, “Unite to Help Needy, President Monson Urges,” *Deseret News*, Nov. 21, 1997, sec. B, p. 2.
20. “Conference Center Draws Members from Many Nations,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 106.
21. “At Home with the Hinckleys,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2003, 32; *Ensign*, Oct. 2003, 22.
22. “The Faith to Move Mountains,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 82.
23. “The Work Goes On,” *Liabona*, July 2001, 6; *Ensign*, May 2001, 6.

MILESTONES IN THE PRESIDENCY OF GORDON B. HINCKLEY



During his years as President of the Church, Gordon B. Hinckley:

- Saw Church membership grow from just over 9 million to 13 million.
- Dedicated 63 temples, including those in Palmyra, Nauvoo, and Winter Quarters and many smaller temples, whose building he first announced in 1997.

• Made more than 90 visits to countries outside the United States and numerous trips within the country to visit with Latter-day Saints. Traveled more than a million miles as President of the Church.

• Introduced to the Church and to the world, with the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (*Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102) and “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the

Apostles” (*Liabona* and *Ensign*, Apr. 2000, 2–3).

• Saw six quorums of the Seventy—the Third to Eighth—added to the Church’s leadership.

• Saw general conference broadcast in over 80 languages, the *Liabona* published in

51 languages, and the Book of Mormon or selections from it translated into 106 languages and added to a large commercial publisher’s offerings.

• Oversaw construction of and dedicated the Conference Center, which more than tripled the number of people who could watch general conference in person. He also dedicated the renovated Tabernacle.

• Met numerous times with heads of state and other government



leaders from presidents of the United States to the king of Tonga and the president of Ghana.

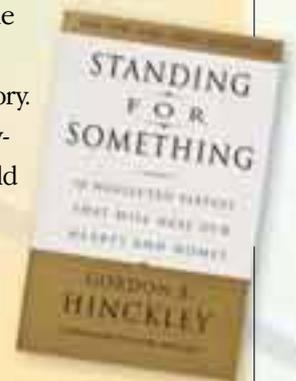
• Instructed priesthood leaders in global leadership training sessions broadcast via satellite.

• Announced establishment of the Perpetual Education Fund.

• Appeared on nationwide television in the United States and Australia several times.

• Asked Church members to read the Book of Mormon in the final months of 2005, resulting in more people reading the book than at any other time in history.

• Authored several books that sold throughout the United States. ■



LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY BUSATH PHOTOGRAPHY; RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH AT PRESS CONFERENCE BY DON GRAYSTON, COURTESY OF DESERT MORNING NEWS; PHOTOGRAPH OF FIRST PRESIDENCY BY CRAIG DIMOND; PHOTOGRAPH OF EDMONTON ALBERTA TEMPLE BY MEL EBELSHAUSER; PHOTOGRAPH OF CONFERENCE CENTER BY MATTHEW REIER



The Prophet Spoke to Youth

President Gordon B. Hinckley loved the youth of the Church. Shortly after he was sustained as President of the Church in 1995, he said to the press: “We are particularly proud of our youth. I think we have never had a stronger generation of young men and women than we have today. . . . They are going forward with constructive lives, nurturing themselves both intellectually and spiritually. We have no fears or doubts concerning the future of this work.”¹

And in general conference he said: “I love the youth of the Church. I have said again and again that I think we have never had a better generation than this. How grateful I am for your integrity, for your ambition to train your minds and your hands to do good work, for your love for the word of the Lord, and for your desire to walk in paths of virtue and truth and goodness.”²



President Hinckley’s Six B’s

One of the most memorable messages given by President Hinckley for teens was the six B’s. In a special fireside, broadcast around the world in November 2000, President Hinckley taught teens six ways to be:

Be grateful. “Thank the Lord for His marvelous Church. . . . Thank Him for all that it offers you. Thank Him for friends and loved ones, for parents and brothers and sisters, for family. Let a spirit of thanksgiving guide and bless your days and nights. Work at it. You will find it will yield wonderful results.”

Be smart. “The Lord wants you to educate your minds and hands, whatever your chosen field. . . . Become a workman of integrity in the world that lies ahead of you.”

Be clean. “We live in a world that is

filled with filth and sleaze, a world that reeks of evil. . . . Avoid evil talk. . . . Don’t waste your time in destructive entertainment. . . . I don’t care what the variety [of illicit drugs] may be. They will destroy you if pursued. . . . In matters of sex . . . you know when you are walking on dangerous ground, when it is so easy to stumble and slide into the pit of transgression. I plead with you to be careful, to stand safely back from the cliff of sin over which it is so easy to fall. Keep yourselves clean.”

Be true. “You who are members of this Church must have a loyalty to it. . . . Be true to your own convictions. You know what is right, and you know what is wrong.”

Be humble. “I believe the meek and humble are those who are teachable. They are willing to learn.”

Be prayerful. “You need His help. . . . You cannot do it alone. You will come to realize that and recognize that more and more as the years pass. So live that in good conscience you can speak with the Lord.”³





From around the World

President Hinckley was the only prophet youth around the world knew while in their teen years. He was beloved and revered. Here are some teens' and young adults' feelings about President Hinckley:

I've never met President Hinckley, but when I see his picture, I feel good. He is almost like another father to me. I know he is a prophet. The six B's made a big impression on me. Being clean and being humble struck me and led me to repent of my pride. I tried to follow the prophet.

So-Ra L., 19, Korea

President Gordon B. Hinckley was a true man of faith. His teachings helped me become a better young man—to have more faith and patience, to pray regularly, to be obedient to my parents and to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Gazelem C., 15, Philippines

When I was about nine years old, President Hinckley came to a conference in Geneva, Switzerland. I remember watching him come into the hall, and he radiated love and kindness. I was very excited to see him. President Hinckley was a great example for me. It always impressed me when he spoke to the youth in general conference because I knew what he said came from God. I had great trust in him.

Annina S., 17, Switzerland

President Hinckley's many teachings

made me feel that he really understood the challenges of young people in this latter day. He always warned young people, reminding us not to go astray.

Yu C., 20, Taiwan

I will never forget how I felt the moment in which President Hinckley arrived at Pacaembu Stadium. I felt the Spirit of God intensely. When President Hinckley was ending his talk, he said to us, "You can leave here, go home, and forget everything that I said here today, but never forget that I love you." I will never forget those words that have meant so much to me.

Dryele M., 20, Brazil

I love President Hinckley. His quiet dignity makes me feel at peace and reassures me that I am being led by a man of God. When I saw him, I couldn't help but smile and feel thankful.

Candice M., 15, New Zealand

NOTES

1. Quoted in Jeffrey R. Holland, "President Gordon B. Hinckley: Stalwart and Brave He Stands," *Liabona*, June 1995 (special edition), 4; *Ensign*, June 1995, 2.
2. "This Is the Work of the Master," *Ensign*, May 1995, 70.
3. See "A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth," *Liabona*, Apr. 2001, 30–41; *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 4–15; *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 2–11.

Children Remember President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught us about love. He was not afraid to make us chuckle with his kind and witty humor. He wanted us to try our best in everything we do. He said: “Never forget, my dear young friends, that you really are a child of God. . . . May life be kind to you, for you are indeed a child of God, worthy and deserving of His love and blessing” (“You Are a Child of God,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2003, 119).

We will always remember President Hinckley’s powerful testimony and example, which make our hearts exclaim, “We thank Thee, O God, for a prophet!”

Here’s what some of the children of the Church have said about President Hinckley:

He had a kind and loving face.

Abigail H., Scotland

He was a true prophet, and he told good stories and jokes.

Jason L., Utah, USA

He was a good man.

Feauai S., Samoa



He loved everybody in the whole world.

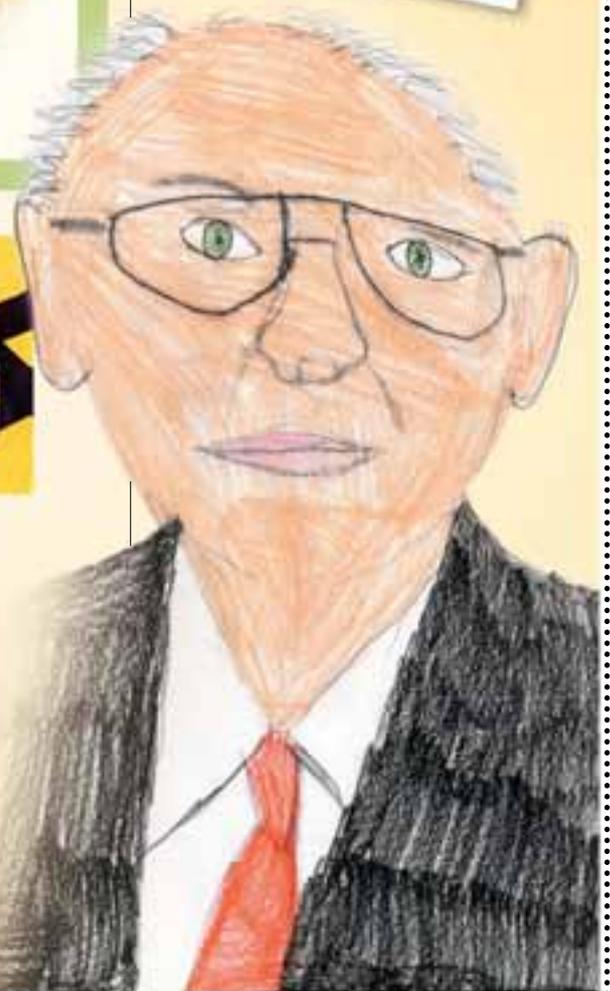
Amelita L., Queensland, Australia

He was my friend.

Jonathan B., Germany

He cared about me.

Lewis W., Chile





A Daughter's Tribute

VIRGINIA H. PEARCE

I am honored to speak on behalf of our family at this solemn and sacred occasion. We desire to raise our voice in celebration of the life of our father and prophet and to bear testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ on this beautiful winter morning.

How grateful we are for the love shown toward our father and to us as his family. We thank you, each one of you, for your prayers and many kindnesses.

We thank the doctors and nurses who have guided his care and have acted with respect, diligence, compassion, and great skill.

We must thank Dad's secretary, Don Staheli, an extraordinary man of humility, capacity, and generosity, who, along with a marvelous staff and wonderful security officers, have literally made it possible for our father to fulfill his responsibilities as the President of the Church.

We cannot find words to tell you of our love for our father's associates and their wives. President Monson, President Eyring, and President Faust, whom we miss, have been counselors extraordinaire. President Packer and the Quorum of the Twelve, the

Presiding Bishopric, the Quorums of Seventy, the general auxiliary officers—as quorums, presidencies, and individuals—we have found them to be devoid of selfish interests and completely dedicated to the kingdom. In that context they have helped, loved, and assisted our father and, by extension, us. There is nothing so touching to the human soul as to see men and women of great power extend private, thoughtful, and quiet kindness.

Sometime during the year of 1837 in the backcountry of Ontario, Canada, John E. Page came preaching the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Wearing the coat Joseph Smith put on his back in Kirtland, Brother Page and his companion taught the gospel to the Hinckley and Judd families as well as to many others. Lois Judd Hinckley (Gordon B. Hinckley's great-grandmother) was among those baptized. With her children and other family members, she followed the Saints south. By 1843 they found themselves in Springfield, Illinois. Her son Ira Nathaniel Hinckley (then about 14 years of age) made his way to Nauvoo. He became a skilled blacksmith and builder. He married. In 1850 on their way to the Salt Lake



Valley, cholera claimed Ira's young wife and half brother. He buried them himself on the same day, then picked up his 11-month-old baby and finished the journey. Ira would spend the rest of his life answering the needs of a colonizing Church. Cove Fort stands today as the product of his able workmanship and devotion.

Ira Nathaniel's son Bryant S. Hinckley (father of President Hinckley) was an educator, teaching at Brigham Young Academy and the LDS Business College. He was president of the largest stake in the Church for many years. He knew heartache and faced challenges that would test the faith of the strongest Saint, but he never wavered in devotion to the Lord and His Church.

Speaking at a devotional at BYU in 1999, President Hinckley recalled these "three generations of my forebears who have been faithful in the Church. Reflecting on [their] lives . . .," he said, "I looked down at my daughter, at her daughter, who is my grandchild, and at her children, my great-grandchildren. I suddenly realized that I stood right in the middle of these seven generations—three before me and three after me. . . . There passed through my mind a sense of the tremendous obligation that was mine to pass on all that I had received as an inheritance from my forebears to the generations who have now come after me."¹

As part of those generations who have come after him, we thank him



Members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and other General Authorities line an entrance to the Conference Center as President Gordon B. Hinckley's casket is brought in.

and our mother for the tempered strength of their link between our forebears and us. Our parents loved us, taught us, corrected us, laughed and prayed for and with us. We honor them. And we likewise pledge to pass on to future generations our complete devotion to the Savior and His Church.

But this isn't just about our little family: 5 children, 25 grandchildren, and 63 great-grandchildren. Because, as President Hinckley has often told us, we are all one great family—some 13 million strong—sharing an inheritance of faith and enjoying a covenant relationship with God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, with responsibilities to help one another along the way.

Our father was adorable. And he was a marvel to watch. Disciplined and courageous, with an unbelievable capacity for work, he believed in growth. A favorite scripture reads: "That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter

until the perfect day" (D&C 50:24). That process of continual growth is the story of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that he loved to tell, as well as the story of his own life. That kind of growth requires faith, courage, discipline, and hard work—partnered with the gracious hand of the Lord.

At no time was this growth process seen more forcefully by us as a family than during the past four years, the capstone years of his life. Following the death of Mother, his grief was almost overwhelming. Characteristically, he acknowledged it—felt it, wept, and mourned deeply. He went to the Lord with his tears, thus allowing the loss to carve out an even deeper place in his heart for compassion and dig an even deeper well of faith and trust in God. Then, with that increase in compassion and faith, he put on his shoes and went back to work—in every sense of the word.

Two years later as he faced a diagnosis of cancer, he repeated the pattern.

He did what all of us would do—he mourned the loss of good health and felt the fear of a disease that had taken his mother, his brother, and two of his sisters. Knowing that his life was in the hands of the Lord and feeling the power of the prayers of millions of you, he said that he felt compelled to do his part. And with the wonderful help of medical friends, he did just that—with courage and good humor. The result was a miraculous two-year extension of his life, when he could get up each morning, put on his shoes, and go to work.

Exactly one week prior to his death, he offered the dedicatory prayer of a renovated chapel in Salt Lake City. In that prayer, in a very unusual way, he petitioned the Lord for himself as prophet. He spoke with gratitude that “from the days of Joseph Smith to the present Thou hast chosen and appointed a prophet to this people. We thank Thee and plead with Thee that Thou wilt comfort and sustain him and bless him according to his needs and Thy great purposes.”

We bear testimony that his peaceful passing is evidence that the Lord heard and answered his prayers according to his needs and the great purposes of Him who reigns in the heavens, who died that we might live forever and in whose name we close—even the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, amen. ■

NOTE

1. “Keep the Chain Unbroken,” in *Brigham Young University 1999–2000 Speeches* (2000), 2, www.speeches.byu.edu.

Prophets Are about Miracles

BISHOP H. DAVID BURTON
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.





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. ■

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



Footprints on the Sands of Time

ELDER EARL C. TINGEY
Of the Presidency of the Seventy

I am grateful for this invitation to speak and pray that the Spirit will convey my testimony and words to your hearts.

As I ponder the life of our beloved prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, I am reminded of the following verse from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

*Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.¹*

Today I hope that as we honor his legacy, we ponder the “footprints on the sands of time” left by President Hinckley. Think about what comes to your mind when I speak of the President Gordon B. Hinckley era. In the short time we have together, I can mention only a few footprints of the many that have made an impression on me.

Gordon B. Hinckley was the great communicator. He opened the doors to the world’s media and defined the Church to a worldwide audience. Commencing as a young returned missionary, more than 70 years ago, he pioneered the use of filmstrips,

movies, colored pictures, pamphlets, and missionary literature to tell the story of our Church. These same techniques, continually being improved, are still used today.

The Hinckley era evokes the image of missionary work to all the world. In the almost 13 years of President Hinckley’s presidency, over 400,000 missionaries have been called, representing over 40 percent of all missionaries ever called since the Church was organized. Almost one-third of all members today were baptized since President Hinckley became our prophet. President Hinckley’s challenge to increase our missionary efforts and our retention of new converts remains a charge we are still working to achieve.

Perhaps the most recognizable and eternal of all of the “footprints on the sands” of President Gordon B. Hinckley is the construction of approximately 75 new temples since he became our President. Every ordinance performed in these temples becomes a witness to the prophetic foresight and wisdom of President Hinckley to bring temples closer to the people. How grateful we are as

individuals and as a Church for this remarkable legacy.

Another wonderful and likeable of President Hinckley’s “footprints on the sands” is his warm sense of humor. Everyone who associated with him or heard him speak remembers an incident in which his unique sense of humor was evident.

I remember an occasion several years ago after he began to use a cane. I arrived at the Church Administration Building about 7:00 in the morning, and as I approached the elevator, I saw President Hinckley and a security officer coming toward the elevator. I pushed the button, the elevator door opened, and I stepped inside, holding the door open. I could hear President Hinckley, with his cane, approaching. As he came to the opened door, President Hinckley looked at me, kept walking, and said, “Earl, go ahead and ride the elevator. I’m taking the stairs.” The elevator door closed. I felt about that high. I comfortably rode up to my floor, while the prophet of the Lord climbed the stairs to his office.

On another occasion, as the General Authorities—dressed in their dark suits, white shirts, and conservative ties—entered a meeting with the First Presidency, President Hinckley, with a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face, said, “You all look like a bunch of penguins.”

We will miss his sense of humor.

President Hinckley was truly a Renaissance man. He had wide



Mourners bid farewell to President Hinckley at the viewing, held in the Conference Center.

interests and was an expert in many areas. With the construction of the Conference Center, which itself is one of the great legacies of President Hinckley, we have witnessed the further development and expansion of musical and theatrical performances in the Church. Our lives are better because these cultural opportunities are now available to us.

One of the most expansive of all of the legacies of President Hinckley and truly one of his “footprints on the sands” is Church education. The magnificence of Brigham Young University and the expanded BYU–Idaho, BYU–Hawaii, LDS Business College campuses, and seminaries and institutes of religion are evidence of his love of education and of students. The establishment of the Perpetual Education Fund, seven years ago, enhances this legacy. Nearly 30,000 students throughout much of the

world are now improving their lives through the remarkable opportunities of education.

Lesser understood, but of significant importance in Church administration, is President Hinckley’s establishment of the Quorums of the Seventy as one of the presiding quorums in the Church. Increasing the number of quorums and the members of the Seventy fourfold accommodates the growth and administration of the Church and fulfills the scriptural mandate that the Twelve may now “call upon the Seventy, when they need assistance, to fill the several calls for preaching and administering the gospel, instead of any others.”²

Perhaps the most personal and long-remembered “footprint” of President Hinckley may be his love of people. Probably each of us in this vast worldwide audience has a special memory of President Hinckley. I hope

my remarks may represent a few of your thoughts—should you have had the opportunity to express them here today.

For each Primary child, youth, young adult, member, and friend, may I say, thank you, President Hinckley. Thank you for your valiant life of service to the Lord. Thank you for your example of integrity and steadfastness. Thank you for your wisdom and judgment. Thank you for your talks, writings, and inspired counsel.

Thank you for your unwavering witness of the calling of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Thank you for your testimony and teachings concerning our Heavenly Father and our relationship, as spirit sons and daughters, to Him. Thank you for your testimony of Jesus Christ.

Thank you for the “footprints on the sands of time” you have left behind. Thank you for letting us know that you loved us. We are better because of you. May I also say thank you to the Hinckley family for sharing your father and grandfather with us.

Dear President Hinckley, we have watched you grow old on stage. May you now enjoy eternal companionship with your beloved Marjorie, other family members, and prior leaders of the Church.

President Hinckley, we love you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. “A Psalm of Life,” in John Bartlett, ed., *Familiar Quotations* (1968), 620.
2. D&C 107:38.

This Gentle Prophet

PRESIDENT BOYD K. PACKER

Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

I first met Gordon B. Hinckley more than 50 years ago. I was called as an Assistant to the Twelve in the same conference he was sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

His first words at the pulpit when he was sustained as an Assistant to the Twelve were: “I know that I have not come that road alone, and I feel very grateful for the many men and women—the great and good men who are here today, and the . . . wonderful people, many of whose names I do not remember—who have helped me” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1958, 123).

Gordon B. Hinckley first arrived at Church headquarters on his way home from his mission in England. He had been asked by the mission president to report to the First Presidency: Presidents Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark Jr., and David O. McKay. The 15-minute meeting lasted over an hour. He was asked to serve as secretary to the new Church mission literature committee.

He was on his own to rustle around to find an empty office somewhere. A friend, whose father owned

an office supply store, gave him an old, warped table. He put a block of wood under one short leg. He brought his own typewriter from home.

He went to the supply room for a ream of paper and was asked, “Do you have any idea how many sheets of paper are in a ream?”

He replied, “Yes, 500 sheets.”

“What in the world are you going to do with 500 sheets of paper?”

He answered, “I am going to write on them one sheet at a time.”

He never stopped writing. For years I have had a weekly meeting with President Hinckley. Often I found him at his desk writing out his talks in longhand.

My first assignment as an Assistant to the Twelve was as assistant to Elder Hinckley in the Missionary Department.

Soon thereafter he left to tour the missions in Europe with President Henry D. Moyle. After he returned, he told me that one of the hardest things he ever had to do happened in Düsseldorf.

On their last evening in Europe, President Moyle hosted a dinner for

the missionaries, including Elder Hinckley’s son Richard. Elder Hinckley said good-bye to his son at the hotel. He said that to watch Richard walk away with his companion into the cold, dark night was the hardest thing he ever had to do. He wept as he told me about it.

Brother Hinckley’s extraordinary intelligence and his incredible memory were immediately apparent. But I had learned something else more important. I had seen inside of Elder Gordon B. Hinckley. He has always been a very private person, and only occasionally does one see inside of him.

In trying to describe President Hinckley’s ability to communicate, I recalled years ago traveling in Pakistan with Elder Jacob de Jager, one of the Seventy, whom we referred to as “the smiling, happy Dutchman.” Our host was Mr. Suleman Habib, a longtime friend from a prominent banking family in Karachi.

One day Suleman took us out of the city into the countryside to see one of his farms. We came upon a large group of laborers, poorly dressed, building a road with pick and shovel. They spoke in Urdu, a language neither Jacob nor I had ever heard before. The car had hardly stopped when Jacob was out the door. He mingled with the laborers.

Suleman watched him intently then turned to me and said, “That man can communicate with these Urdu people better than I can.” And a



With his wife, Jane, Elder Richard G. Hinckley of the Seventy greets people who came to pay respects to his father.

moment later he added, “That man could charm a donkey or a king!”

Whatever power of communication and charm Suleman saw in Jacob de Jager was found in rich measure in Gordon B. Hinckley.

There came to my office one day an Islamic cleric who was in Salt Lake City to receive treatment at the Moran Eye Center. I arranged for an audience with the First Presidency. Dr. Abdurrahman Wahid, much like President Hinckley, had a sparkling sense of humor. Accompanying Dr. Wahid was Dr. Alwi Shihab, a professor of Islamic studies at Harvard University.

In that meeting, Dr. Wahid mentioned that he had been asked to run for the office of president of Indonesia. “If I am elected,” Dr. Wahid said, “Alwi Shihab will be my foreign minister.”

President Hinckley said, “If you decide to run and you are elected, I will come and visit you in Jakarta.”

He was elected, and we did go to Jakarta, where President Hinckley was the guest of honor at a dinner given at the presidential palace.

The first message of condolence I received on the death of President Hinckley was from Alwi Shihab. Yesterday there arrived a very large floral tribute from President Wahid, former president of Indonesia.

I have regarded this power of communication and charm in President Hinckley as brotherly love and humility. It was always apparent whether he was with the laborers on a dusty road or a banquet in a presidential palace.

President Hinckley grew up schooled in the doctrines of the gospel. His roots go back to Cove Fort, in central Utah. Restored, it stands now much as it did in the pioneer days when his grandfather built it.

Much of President Hinckley’s growth I attribute to his wife, Marjorie

Pay Hinckley, who was patient with a man who was always on the go, always 10 steps ahead of her. For example, one evening he was packing for an overseas trip the following morning.

Marjorie asked, “Well, am I going to go with you?”

He responded, “We don’t have to decide that right now!”

He knew, as we all should know, that the doctrines of Jesus Christ are synonymous with family.

Succession to the presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a remarkable process. Always the senior Apostle becomes the President, and the next senior becomes the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Outlined in the revelations are the truths and instructions by which the Brethren administer the Church. Whatever the crisis or whatever the opportunity, the directions and guidance can be found in the verses of scripture.

No one who has known the order of things speculates on who will be the next President of the Church. It has always been this pattern. There is no aspiring for the position, no avoiding the Lord’s will.

Gordon B. Hinckley did not seek the many calls and assignments that came to him, but he did not shy away either.

In one of the earliest revelations, the Lord said, “That every man might speak in the name of God the Lord,

even the Savior of the world” (D&C 1:20) that “the weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones” (D&C 1:19).

With the Church growing very rapidly worldwide, we often go to distant places to organize or reorganize a unit of the Church. We are sometimes asked, “Where on earth will you find the new leaders?” We do not have to find them. They are already there, just as Gordon B. Hinckley was there. The Lord provides them. They are serving faithfully and paying for the privilege in tithes and offerings.

In a separate ordinance following baptism, members of the Church have conferred upon them the Holy

Ghost, which the scriptures explain will “teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance” (John 14:26). The Holy Ghost is the Inspirer. Inspiration is always there, if you learn to live with it and for it.

One of the things that President Hinckley understood best is the word *family*. It is not difficult to find statements on the family in his sermons and talks and counsel, whether to large congregations, to individuals, or more particularly to families.

I pay tribute to the family of Gordon Bitner and Marjorie Pay Hinckley. They can be described as ideal. They, like their father, are unassuming. Whatever prominence that has come to them does not show

any more than it was visible in him.

In the cemetery not too far from here, there is a headstone with “Marjorie Pay Hinckley” engraved on it and, beside her name, the name of “Gordon Bitner Hinckley.”

When Mary approached the tomb of Jesus, an angel said, “He is not here: for he is risen” (Matthew 28:6; see also Mark 16:6; Luke 24:6).

In due course it can be said of Gordon Bitner and Marjorie Pay Hinckley, “They are not here, for they are risen and together.”

May our Father bless the memory of this gentle prophet and his eternal companion and the sacred work over which he presided, I pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

after time, he would quietly say something like this, with a pleasant smile, “Oh, things will work out.”

He was an optimist. Some of that came from his great personal capacities. Many problems he could work out himself. He saw the way to build temples across the earth. He gave the credit to the faithful Saints who paid their tithes in good times and in hard times. But he was the one who sketched, as he returned from Colonia Juárez, Mexico, to El Paso Texas, the design for those smaller temples, which now bless people across the world.

He was the one who saw a way for young people in many countries to walk out of poverty by choosing for

Things Will Work Out

PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

We each feel that something has been taken from our hearts with the death of President Hinckley. There was a sense of happy anticipation to look forward to his powerful witness of the Savior, to feel his love for us, and to know that he would bring us a smile and hope as he spoke of even the most difficult challenges.

In the last few days, I have remembered his voice. I heard that voice so many times when a difficult problem facing the Church was brought to him. He would listen carefully, perhaps asking a question or two, to be sure that he understood the magnitude of the difficulty facing us and that those who brought the problem to him knew he understood. Time



The congregation stands as President Hinckley's casket is brought into the Conference Center at his funeral on February 2.

themselves a training program which would give them the capacity to repay a small loan from what he named the Perpetual Education Fund. He is the one who conceived of this lovely Conference Center, where thousands unite their faith to hear the word of God.

His personal legacy goes beyond that brief list and my power to describe. But his accomplishments have at least one thing in common. Always they were to bless individuals with opportunity. And always he thought of those with the least opportunity, the ordinary person struggling to cope with the difficulties of everyday life and the challenge of living the gospel of Jesus Christ. More than once he tapped his finger on my chest when I made a suggestion and said, "Hal, have you remembered the person who is struggling?"

He is in the spirit world today

among the noble prophets who have lived on the earth. He is surely aware of our sorrow and our sense of loss at our separation from him. He knew at the end of his life the pain in his heart of losing someone he loved. If we told him of our grief, he would listen carefully, and then I think he would say something like this, with sympathy in his voice but with a sound in it that would bring a smile to our lips, "Oh, it will work out."

It has for him. His optimism was justified not by confidence in his own powers to work things out but by his great faith that God's powers were in place. He knew that a loving Heavenly Father had prepared a way for families to be bound together forever. He wanted so much to be in the temple in Rexburg, Idaho. Tomorrow was to be the day of dedication. He thrilled at the dedication of temples. He knew what they could mean for someone

who yearned to be reunited forever with a loved one from whom they had been separated by death. Things did work out. He is with Marjorie again, the girl of his dreams. They will be companions forever in glory and in a family.

His optimism stemmed from his unwavering faith in Jesus Christ and the power of His Atonement. He was certain that we would all be resurrected because the Savior was. He was sure that we could all be sealed in families forever, to live in the presence of God the Father and His Beloved Son, if only we would make a choice to be true to sacred covenants with God.

He spoke of such a day of choice in his own life. As a discouraged young missionary in England, he received a letter from his father which said in essence, "Forget yourself and go to work." In his room at 15 Waltham Road, he had been reading earlier that day these words of the Savior: "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."¹ I heard him say that he then went upstairs, knelt down in prayer, and promised the Lord that he would do his best. President Hinckley said of that promise: "I have been doing that ever since."

President Hinckley's best may be so much more than we can offer the Master. But all God asks of us is that we give our best. President Hinckley would understand our feelings of weakness. He once looked at the

pictures of the prophets who preceded him in this dispensation. He said quietly, “When I look at those pictures and think of where I am, I feel so inadequate.” President Hinckley rarely showed emotion. But in that moment he began to weep, I think not out of fear but out of gratitude. He had consecrated all he had and was to the Savior’s service. Because of his trust in the Savior, he knew that would be enough. Faith in his heart left no room for doubt or fear.

That unfailing confidence in the power of God shaped what he was able to see in the progress of the Lord’s Church. No one was more aware of problems than he. And yet time and again he would say of the Church that we have never done better, and he would give you facts to prove it. Then he would say with conviction in his voice, “And the best is yet to come.”

His optimism came from his youthful choice to consecrate all he had to the Savior and His work, out of faith. He chose to put the gospel down into his heart by giving his best all his life. That brought to him a blessing he would want us to claim. He more than hoped that things would work out. He knew they would if only he would go forward in faith. I saw what that allowed God to do for him and his heart as his life closed.

Just a few days ago as President Monson and I greeted him, he smiled and extended his hand to each of us. He asked me, “Hal, how

are you?” I gave a simple answer, “Fine.” I only wish I had answered: “Better than ever. And I know the best is yet to come because I was blessed to live when I could hear your voice and learn from your example.”

His example even changed what I read. I knew that he loved reading Shakespeare from his college days as a student of Benjamin Roland Lewis. So I got a copy of the collected works of Shakespeare. I mentioned to President Hinckley that I was reading it. He said: “How do you find the time?” And then he asked: “Where are you reading in it?” I said, “Henry the Fifth.” His reply was, “That’s a good place to start,” with the emphasis on the word *start*, to make it clear that there was much work ahead.

His example of courage and my reading in that play helped me understand a lesson he had tried to teach me years before about serving Heavenly Father’s children. When I was responsible for teaching the gospel to our youth in our seminary programs across the world, he had said, tapping his forefinger on my chest, “Hal, why don’t you do better in getting the gospel down into their hearts?”

He knew that only when it was down in their hearts, as it was in his, would they be strong enough and brave enough to qualify for eternal life. He loved young people. He knew their weaknesses and the fierce

opposition which they would face. And he must have known the words which Shakespeare gave King Henry to speak when he was about to lead his small force into battle against overwhelming odds:

*O God of battles! steel my soldiers’ hearts;
Possess them not with fear; take from them now
The sense of reckoning, if th’ opposed numbers
Pluck their hearts from them!*²

President Hinckley knew that God will steel and fortify us all as we choose to take the gospel down into our hearts. And he knew that the choice was made by consecrating all we are and have to follow the Master. He knew it was best to make that choice early, in the days of youth, because it might take years for us to qualify for the change in our hearts which comes because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

For all of us across the world, I express gratitude for such a prophet, such a teacher, such a father, and such a friend. He was a true witness of Jesus Christ and a prophet of God. We are better because of his influence and his example. And the best can be yet to come as we take the gospel of Jesus Christ down into our hearts, as he did. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Matthew 10:39.
2. *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1999), *King Henry the Fifth*, act 4, scene 1, lines 270–73.

God Be with You Till We Meet Again

PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON
First Counselor in the First Presidency

My beloved brothers and sisters and members of the Hinckley family, I am deeply honored by this privilege to pay tribute to my cherished friend and colleague

President Gordon B. Hinckley.
The poet wrote:

*Here and there, and now and then,
God makes a giant among men.*

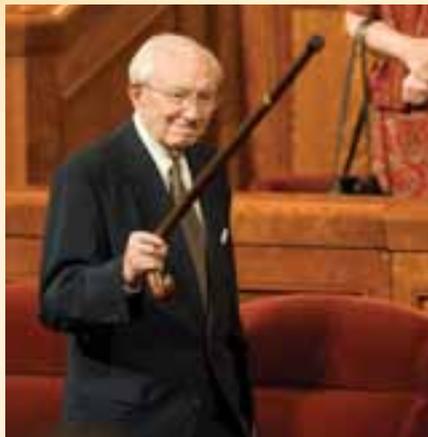
President Hinckley was such a giant—a giant of knowledge, of faith, of love, of testimony, of compassion, of vision. I cannot adequately express how much I miss him. It's difficult to recall a time when he and I did not know each other. We were friends long before either one of us was called to be a General Authority of the Church, and we have served side by side for over 44 years in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and in the First Presidency. We have shared much over the years—heartache and happiness, sorrow and laughter. Since his passing on Sunday, I have reflected on some of the countless experiences we have had together. I share with you just a few.

In May of 1964 he and I were assigned together to the Gunnison Utah Stake. Prior to our first meeting on Saturday, I noticed that the cuffs of President Hinckley's shirt were held together with paper clips instead of cuff links. I said to him, "Gordon, I like your cuff links!" He laughed and said that he had forgotten to bring his cuff links. I replied that as a good Boy Scout, I had come prepared and had another set, which I was more than happy to give to him—and I did.



On another occasion, back in the mid-1960s, Sister Monson and I, along with Elder Spencer W. Kimball and Sister Kimball, were invited by the Hinckleys to have dinner at their home. During the course of the evening, the doorbell rang. When it was opened, there stood one of the Hinckley's home teachers—without his companion. He was invited in, and he seated himself on the sofa in the Hinckley living room. We all sat down and were rather fascinated as the home teacher began what could only be described as “grilling” the Hinckleys as to how they were doing in such areas as family prayer, family scripture study, family home evening, personal scripture study, and on and on. As they would answer one question, the home teacher would fire another one at them. Of course, all was done in a good-natured way, and it was obvious to us that this home teacher took his duties seriously.

During the past few years, we've all enjoyed observing President Hinckley with his cane, walking to his seat in the Conference Center while waving to the crowd or using it to tap someone on the shoulder. President Hinckley and I have for years gone to the same doctor, and during one of my visits a couple of years ago, the doctor said to me, “Could you please do me a favor? President Hinckley should use his cane for walking because it steadies him. The last thing we want is for him to fall and break a hip or worse. Instead, he waves it



President Hinckley first joked about having to use a cane in the April 2001 general conference. He often used the cane to wave to members, noted President Thomas S. Monson in his funeral remarks.

around and then doesn't use it when he walks. Tell him the cane has been prescribed by his doctor, and he needs to use it as it was meant to be used.”

I listened to the physician's request and then replied, “Doctor, I am President Hinckley's counselor. You are his doctor. *You* tell him!”

May I share just one final experience—a simple act which has touched me deeply. Each Thursday morning the members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have a meeting in the temple. We are driven in carts underground from the Church office parking lot to the temple. During the cold winter months, President Hinckley always wore a coat and a hat during the brief ride. As our cart passed under Main Street, President Hinckley knew that we were then within the confines of the temple rather than under the street and, without a word, would remove his hat and place it on his lap. He seemed to know instinctively when that moment arrived. It was such a simple yet

profound expression of reverence and respect for the house of the Lord, and it made a deep impression on me.

Most of you will remember learning of Sir Thomas More, an English statesman and author of an earlier period who was steadfast in cleaving unto his beliefs. He was called “a man for all seasons.”

Amidst the conflicts of our time and the turbulence of our seasons, our Heavenly Father provided for us “a man for all seasons.” His name: President Gordon B. Hinckley. He was our prophet, seer, and revelator. He was an island of calm in a sea of storm. He was as a lighthouse to the lost mariner. He was your friend and my friend. He comforted and calmed us when conditions in the world were frightening. He guided us undeviatingly on the path which will lead us back to our Heavenly Father.

Since all who wanted to greet President Hinckley personally could not go to him, he went worldwide to them as long as he was able to travel. He was a prophet to the people. Not neglected were the children who flocked to his side, nor did he overlook the parents of those precious ones.

President Hinckley has truly been a prophet for our time. It was said of the Master that He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man”¹ and “went about doing good, . . . for God was with him.”² President Hinckley has devoted his life to doing good, and God has surely been with him.

Just a week and a half ago, President Hinckley met with President Eyring and with me in our First Presidency meeting. His voice was strong; his mind was clear. He was self-assured and decisive. A few days later he lay near death; his family members gathered to be near him in his last hours. President Eyring and I were privileged to be with him and the family on

Saturday and again on Sunday, when we were joined by President Boyd K. Packer. As long as I live, I shall cherish the memory of my last visit to his home, brief hours before his passing. We provided a blessing, joined by all of his family members and others present who held the priesthood. It was a sacred time of parting; we knew the veil was very thin and that he was

being summoned to the other side.

As I returned to my home, I recalled the sweet and poignant statement President Hinckley made in his talk at the general Relief Society broadcast in September of 2003, when his sweet Marjorie was still by his side. Speaking of her, he said: “For 66 years we have walked together, hand in hand, with love and encouragement, with appreciation and respect. It cannot be very long before one of us will step through the veil. I hope the other will follow soon. I just would not know how to get along without her, even on the other side, and I would hope that she would not know how to get along without me.”³

Within six months, his beloved Marjorie had stepped through the veil. He missed her every day, every moment. What a glorious reunion they have now had.

To you children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren, remember that President Hinckley still lives. He is on a heavenly mission to others who await his influence and testimony. His plea to all of you could be found in the book of 3 John: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”⁴

My dear brothers and sisters, all that we knew and loved about President Gordon B. Hinckley continues. His spirit has simply gone home to that God who gave him life. Wherever I go in this beautiful world, a part of this cherished friend will always go with me.

Below: The funeral procession prepares to leave the Conference Center. Bottom left: People lined the streets along the route to the cemetery and waved canes and white handkerchiefs as the funeral procession went by. Bottom right: Members of the Hinckley family at the Salt Lake City Cemetery, where President Hinckley was buried.





WHAT IS THIS THING THAT MEN CALL DEATH

By President Gordon B. Hinckley
(1910–2008)

*What is this thing that men call
death,
This quiet passing in the night?
'Tis not the end, but genesis
Of better worlds and greater light.*

*O God, touch Thou my aching
heart,
And calm my troubled, haunting
fears.
Let hope and faith, transcendent,
pure,
Give strength and peace beyond
my tears.*

*There is no death, but only change
With recompense for victory won;
The gift of Him who loved all men,
The Son of God, the Holy One.*

On more than one occasion, President Hinckley used as part of his message the words to one of his favorite hymns. You all know it.

*God be with you till we meet again;
By his counsels guide, uphold you;
With his sheep securely fold you.
God be with you till we meet again.*

*God be with you till we meet again;
When life's perils thick confound
you,
Put his arms unfailing round you.
God be with you till we meet again.*

*God be with you till we meet again;
Keep love's banner floating o'er
you;
Smite death's threat'ning wave
before you.
God be with you till we meet again.*

*Till we meet, till we meet,
Till we meet at Jesus' feet. . . .
God be with you till we meet again.⁵*

I share with you the words he spoke in general conferences after quoting that hymn. Such becomes his farewell to all of us. Said he: “‘God be with you till we meet again’ . . . , my beloved associates. I have sung those simple words in a thousand places across the world . . . with love and affection.”⁶ “I have sung [them] in English when others sang them in a score of languages. I have lifted my voice with those wonderful and simple words on memorable occasions on all the continents of the earth. I have sung them in bidding farewell to missionaries, with tears in

my eyes. I have sung them with men in battle dress during [times of] war. . . . In a thousand places and in many circumstances over these almost numberless years, I have raised my voice with so many others in these words of parting.”⁷ “God bless you, my dear friends.”⁸

On behalf of each one of us, my brothers and sisters, I offer our final farewell to our beloved prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley: Gordon, God be with you till we meet again. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Luke 2:52.
2. Acts 10:38.
3. “To the Women of the Church,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 115.
4. 3 John 1:4.
5. “God Be with You Till We Meet Again,” *Hymns*, no. 152.
6. “Latter-day Saints in Very Deed,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 85.
7. “Till We Meet Again,” *Liabona*, Jan. 2002, 104; *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 89.
8. *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 85.

