

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 multi-lingual 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.

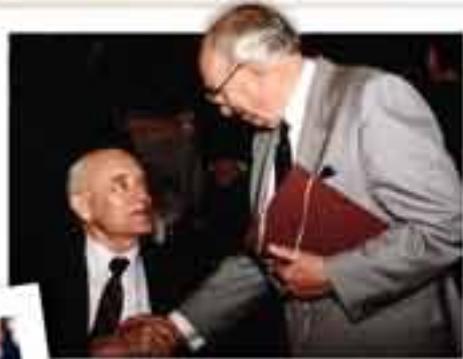




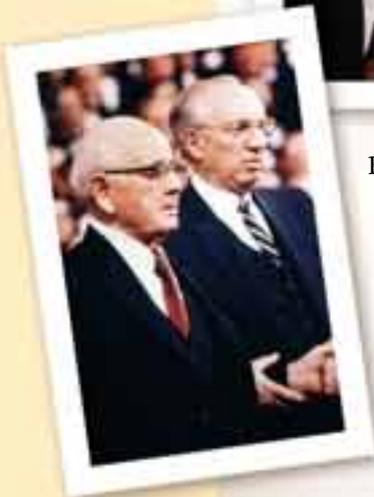
President Hinckley served as a counselor to three Church Presidents: Ezra Taft Benson (above), 1985–94; Howard W. Hunter (right), 1994–95; and Spencer W. Kimball (below), 1981–85. President Hinckley made friends of dignitaries and notable people such as reporter Mike Wallace (opposite page).

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.

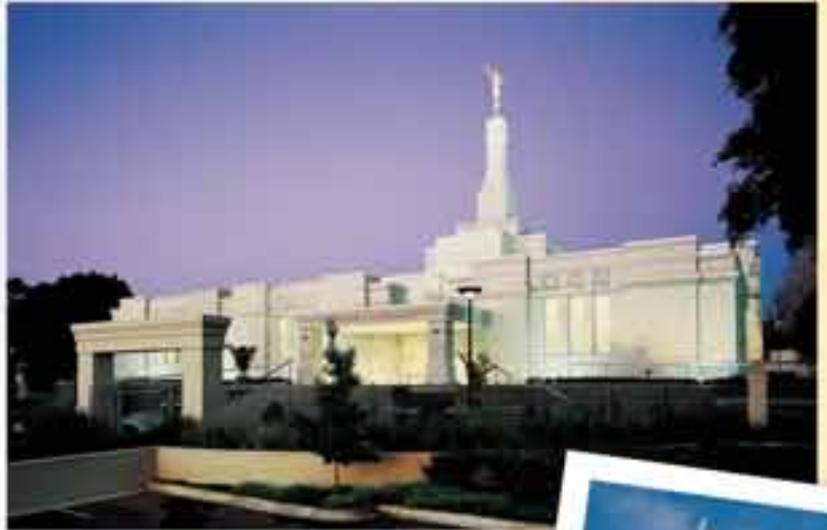
President Hinckley announced in October 1997 that the Church would begin building small temples in areas with few Church members. The plan resulted in unprecedented temple growth. More than 70 temples in 21 countries were constructed under his leadership. In October 2005 President Hinckley broke ground 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



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).

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,



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.

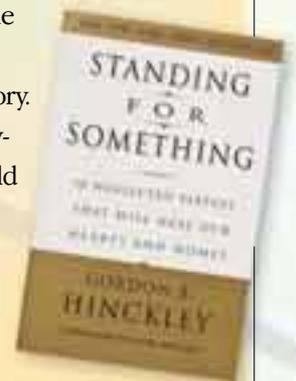
• Instructed priesthood leaders in global leadership training sessions broadcast via satellite.

• 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