

IN MEMORIAM



*Thomas S. Monson*



A SUPPLEMENT TO THE ENSIGN

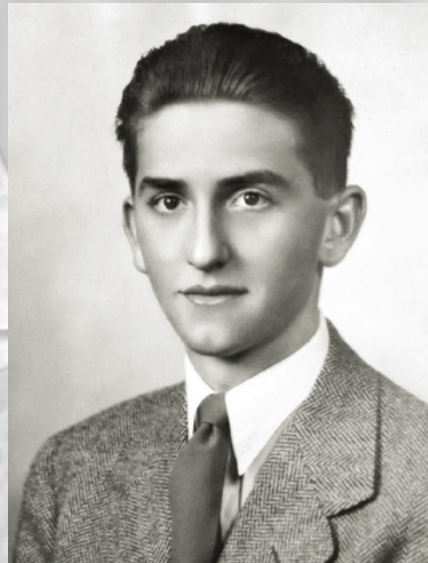
PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON 1927-2018



*“Fear not. Be of good cheer.  
The future is as bright as your faith.”<sup>1</sup>*



**Right: President Monson enjoyed fishing with his son Clark, solemnly awaited the announcement of his calling as an Apostle, and as a lifelong hobby raised pigeons.**



**Above: An active, happy young boy, Tommy Monson enjoyed riding his tricycle. By the time he graduated from high school (above right), he was awarded a certificate for “meritorious service.” His personal example of caring for others reflected one of his favorite scriptures, which says Christ “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38).**





President Thomas S. Monson, who served as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints beginning in February 2008, as a counselor in the First Presidency from 1985 to 2008, and as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles from 1963 to 1985, passed away on January 2, 2018. He was preceded in death by his wife, Frances, who passed away in 2013. They are the parents of three children.

President Thomas S. Monson:

# PROPHET AND FRIEND

*The emergency-room patient seemed ready to be released, but a Salt Lake City doctor and his staff felt hesitant. While the man's treatment and recovery appeared complete, his unkempt appearance and unstable living conditions raised concerns. "Do you have any family members, any friends that could help you follow through with your treatment?" asked the doctor. "Not really," the patient responded, until a recollection surfaced: "Actually, I do have a friend who takes care of me sometimes. His name is Tom Monson."<sup>2</sup>*

President Thomas Spencer Monson was “a special friend of the underdog” and of “the down-and-outers,” as one longtime friend put it.<sup>3</sup> During his entire life, including more than three decades of intense responsibilities as a member of the First Presidency, he made personal visits to elderly friends and strangers an enormous priority and, when prompted by the Spirit, even took time out of important meetings to offer priesthood blessings to sick children. When he attended professional sporting events, instead of inviting prominent associates or public officials to attend with him, he brought friends from his growing-up years in a humble neighborhood. He attended every West High School reunion wearing his “Tom Monson” name badge. This same Thomas Monson, according to one of his sons, was “completely non-discriminatory as to an individual’s public status, persona, or other distinguishing accomplishments: a humble friend from 50 years previous would receive the same—or more—attention as a governor, senator, or prominent businessman.”<sup>4</sup>

People of high station and low, along with millions of

friends and followers both in and out of the Church, lost a loyal friend with the passing of the 16th President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Maintaining that “I have always needed the help of the Lord, and I have always asked for it,”<sup>5</sup> President Monson left behind an administration marked by an outreach to the world at large through humanitarian aid, Church web pages that created greater transparency and helped members understand complex issues, public relations campaigns aimed at helping the world understand the Church, and a flurry of innovations aimed at furthering the work of salvation. Among these were lowering the age at which young men and young women could serve full-time missions, an expansion of the ways that missionaries could reach out to others (including the use of technology), and online forums bringing Church leaders and members worldwide together in virtual face-to-face discussions. During his tenure a new Church handbook was produced that emphasized Christian discipleship. Family history work was simplified, making it easier to research and submit names to the temple for proxy baptisms and other ordinances of salvation.

Despite his many significant accomplishments, few would dispute that President Monson’s most important legacy consists of his powerful personal example. One of his favorite scriptures, found in Acts 10:38, describes Jesus of Nazareth as someone “who went about doing good.” President Monson could always be found doing good in ways the Savior exhorted us to: giving food to the hungry, taking in the stranger, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and entering the prisons of loneliness and despair that often engage the desolate (see Matthew 25:34–40). His humanitarianism, emphasis on people over programs, and dedication to following the Spirit led one reporter who covered President Monson for decades to write, “I have met few people who make such great effort to lift and bring comfort, consolation and cheer to others.”<sup>6</sup> A lifetime filled with family, hardship, opportunity, and, of course, service helped create Thomas S. Monson’s exemplary Christlike legacy of personal ministry.



*President Monson congratulates his friend Thelma Fetzer as she celebrates her 100th birthday in 2010. President Monson often visited elderly friends and strangers.*







### A Generous Home

On the corner of 500 South and 200 West, not far from the railroad tracks running through Salt Lake City, George Spencer and Gladys Condie Monson raised a family through the Great Depression surrounded by Gladys's relatives, descendants of pioneers from Scotland. George's grandparents had joined the Church in Sweden and England before emigrating to America and settling in Salt Lake City. On August 21, 1927, the first son and second child of George and Gladys was born, Thomas Spencer Monson, named after his maternal grandfather, Thomas Sharp Condie, and his father.

Surrounded by family, the Monsons extended their love to many others as well. Visits from hungry transients passing through town were not uncommon in the neighborhood, and Gladys Monson received and fed them "as though each had been an invited guest," President Monson later recalled.<sup>7</sup> She also sent weekly Sunday dinners to "Old Bob" down the street, who regularly offered Tom a dime for the delivery. "I can't accept the money," Tom thoughtfully replied. "My mother would tan my hide."<sup>8</sup> On Sundays, Tom's father would sometimes carry Uncle Elias, his brother crippled from arthritis, to his 1928 Oldsmobile, with Tom in tow, and drive him around the city.

"During this period of my life I was much impressed by the actions of my mother and father," President Monson observed. "It didn't dawn on me that they rarely attended church."<sup>9</sup> He also recalled an ambience of tolerance and goodwill: "I never heard my father speak a negative word toward another person. In fact, he would not remain in the



*Thomas and his siblings were impressed by their parents' kindness (above left). President Monson showed similar kindness as counselor in a stake presidency (center).*





room if anyone were speaking disrespectfully or negatively toward another person.”<sup>10</sup>

Not surprisingly, these attitudes and actions started rubbing off on Tom. Overjoyed one Christmas to receive an electric train set, he nevertheless begged his mother for—and received—an additional car



*Lessons learned as a youth (above) and in his Sunday School class (below) guided his life, even though his old ward building (left) exists no more.*

from a less-impressive train set meant as a gift for a widow’s son down the street. Later, when Tom and his mother delivered the gift and Tom saw the boy’s exuberance over the meager train set, pangs of guilt set in. He ran back home to retrieve not only the car he had taken from the set but also one of his own.<sup>11</sup> Tom later offered his two pet rabbits for Christmas dinner to a friend’s family who had never tasted turkey or chicken.<sup>12</sup> And when a woman took issue with Tom and his buddies hitting baseballs into her yard during their neighborhood games (she often snatched the baseballs and kept them), Tom decided to defuse the situation. Without a word passing between them, he regularly







***After military service, Thomas met, then married, Frances Johnson. They had three children: Thomas Lee, Clark Spencer, and Ann Frances.***

watered her yard in the summer and raked leaves from her lawn in the fall. Then one day she invited him in for milk and cookies—and handed over a boxful of baseballs.<sup>13</sup>

Still, President Monson frequently acknowledged that his boyhood good deeds coexisted with a mischievous streak that sometimes led to a scolding. He and a cousin once collected neighbors' stray dogs and put them into a backyard coal shed, six of which overran Tom's father when he went to open the door.<sup>14</sup> One afternoon a Primary president pulled Tom aside and said she was saddened by the rowdy behavior of many of the boys in Primary opening exercises. Tom offered to help. "The Primary's disciplinary problems," he recalled, "ceased that moment."<sup>15</sup> Still, temptations persisted. He once convinced a friend to skip out on an afternoon Primary class with him. They would make their escape right after Tom took a penny from his pocket and dropped it in the donation box for Primary Children's Hospital. They would then use a dime he had in his pocket to go to Hatch Dairy for Fudgsicles. The plan went awry, however, when the boys discovered Tom had inadvertently donated the dime instead of the penny. So

both returned, where Tom dejectedly donated the penny as well. "For a long while," he later said, "I felt that I, perhaps, had the most substantial investment in the Primary Children's Hospital."<sup>16</sup>

Frequent visits to a family cabin in Provo Canyon initiated a lifelong love of duck hunting, camping, fishing, and swimming in the river; once Tom even rescued a girl swept into dangerous whirlpools.<sup>17</sup> He told of one experience when he and a friend unwisely set fire to some weeds near the family cabin. As always, he used the story as a framework to share an important gospel principle.<sup>18</sup>

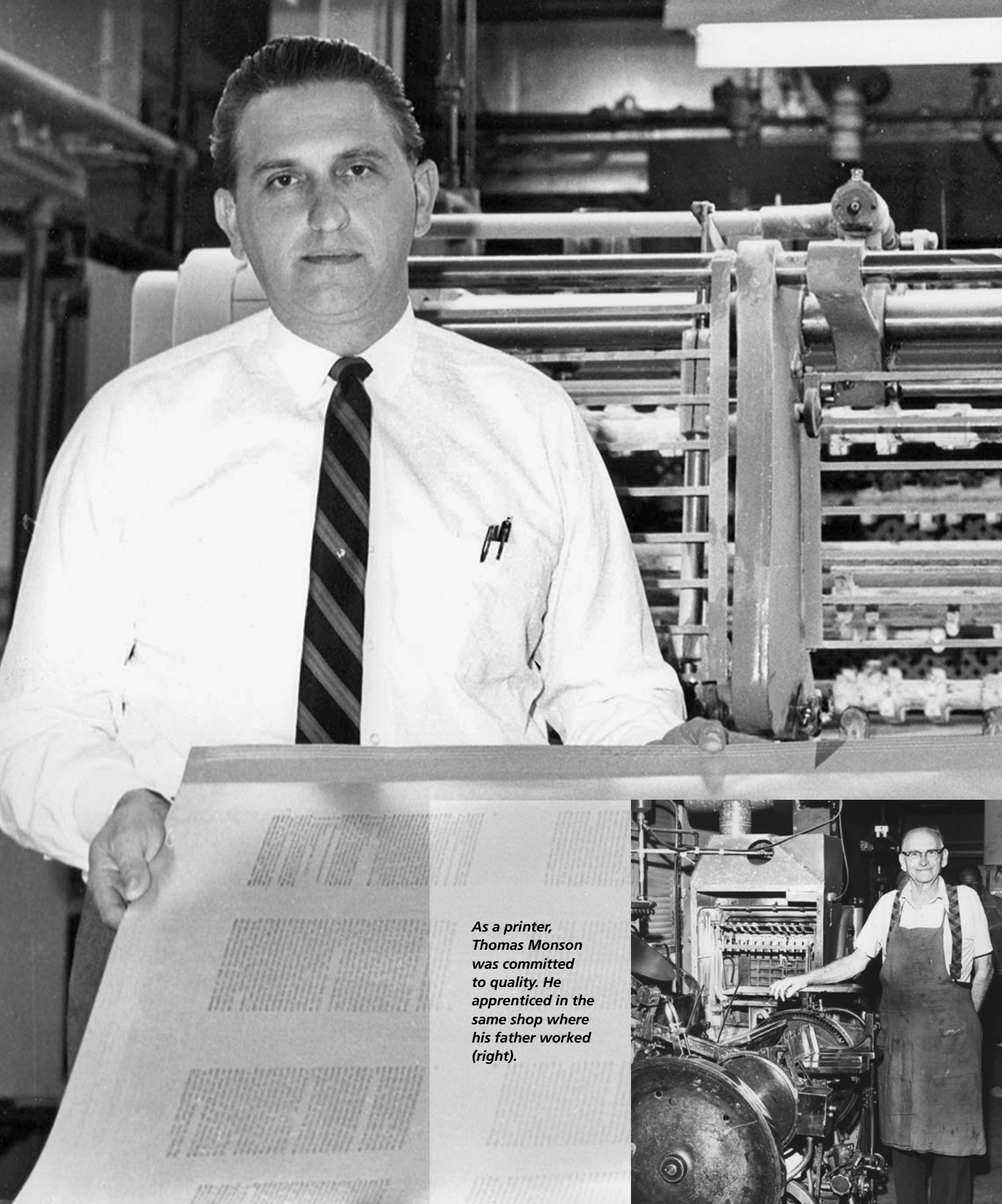
Visits several times a week down the street from his Salt Lake City home to the Chapman public library initiated a love of books and writers, which later enabled him to quote at length from favorite poets such as Wordsworth, Longfellow, Bryant, Tennyson, and Shakespeare.<sup>19</sup>

One particular interest, raising pigeons, which was developed in youth and continued through adulthood, taught young Tom a lesson in stewardship when an Aaronic Priesthood quorum adviser gave him a pigeon that continually returned to the adviser's home, thus creating a weekly priesthood interview opportunity with the boy.<sup>20</sup> However, it was a beloved Sunday School teacher, Lucy Gertsch, whom Tom credited with giving him a foundation for his testimony of Jesus Christ. Her love for a class with rowdy boys transformed their unruly behavior as they listened to Sister Gertsch's Spirit-filled lessons on the Bible.<sup>21</sup>

### **Growing to Manhood**

The economic constraints of the Great Depression forced Tom at age 12 to begin working for his father, who managed a printing company.<sup>22</sup> The shadow of World War II, however, loomed larger than even the Depression as Tom made his way through high school. "Each young man knew that if [the war] continued, he would be in the military," President Monson said of his teenage years.<sup>23</sup> An excellent student with a love of history, he enrolled at the University of Utah at age 17.<sup>24</sup> He seriously considered becoming a history teacher but instead pursued a business





*As a printer, Thomas Monson was committed to quality. He apprenticed in the same shop where his father worked (right).*





degree, while also enjoying institute of religion classes taught by Dr. Lowell Bennion and Dr. T. Edgar Lyon.<sup>25</sup>

While at the university he met the love of his life. After being introduced to Frances Johnson at a Hello Day dance, Tom subsequently called on her. He later reflected that “I was not prepared for the dignity and quiet which prevailed [in her home],” comparing his more boisterous home with that of the Johnsons.<sup>26</sup> Frances’s father noticed the Monson name and, with tears in his eyes, hugged Tom after the two realized that Tom’s great-uncle Elias had introduced the Johnson family to the gospel in Sweden.<sup>27</sup> Both Tom and Frances loved big bands and frequented dances with band leaders such as Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller.<sup>28</sup>

In 1945, Tom joined the U.S. Naval Reserve. During the first three weeks of boot camp, he later jokingly said, “I was convinced my life was in jeopardy. The navy wasn’t trying to train me; it was trying to kill me.” But spiritual experiences accompanied the hard times. After a chief petty officer lined up everybody one Sunday and directed the Catholics, Jews, and Protestants to their meeting places, he approached Tom and asked, “And just what do you guys call yourselves?”

“Until that very moment,” President Monson later recalled, “I had not realized that anyone was standing beside me or behind me on the drill ground. Almost in unison, each of us replied, ‘Mormons!’”<sup>29</sup>

One night just before Christmas, Tom’s LDS friend Leland Merrill, who was in the adjoining barracks’ bunk, began groaning in pain. In desperation, he whispered, “Monson, Monson, aren’t you an elder?” and asked for a priesthood blessing—which Tom had never before performed. Praying

quietly for help, Tom received an answer: “Look in the bottom of the sea bag,” where at 2:00 a.m. he found a missionary handbook, which gave instructions on how to bless the sick. “With about 60 curious sailors looking on, I proceeded with the blessing,” he later said. “Before I could stow my gear, Leland Merrill was sleeping like a child.”<sup>30</sup> Tom also learned from others during military service and admired a

young Catholic man who knelt to pray every night when “we Mormon boys would pray while lying on our bunks.”<sup>31</sup>

Tom served for a year and returned home to graduate with honors from the University of Utah, going on to work as an advertising executive for the Church-owned *Deseret News*. Several months after graduating, he married Frances Johnson in the Salt Lake Temple on October 7, 1948. “I learned quite early to stand on my own feet,” Sister Monson said of their early years together.<sup>32</sup> Almost immediately, the Lord asked

young Brother and Sister Monson to begin their tireless participation in building the kingdom of God.

### A Personal Ministry

In May 1950, Tom and Frances’s bishop, John R. Burt, was called to the stake presidency. Asked who should serve as bishop in his stead, Bishop Burt paused for several minutes: “I was trying to figure out how to explain to [the stake president] why I thought a 22-year-old kid should replace me as bishop.”<sup>33</sup> Thus began young Thomas S. Monson’s ministry over the Temple View Sixth-Seventh Ward, with its 85 widows and the largest demand for welfare services in the Church at the time. Serving as bishop in this particular ward reinforced and intensified Tom’s already strong



***After dedicating Haiti for the preaching of the gospel in 1983, Elder Monson visited the site where a chapel was built.***



charitable instincts. He visited every widow at Christmastime, bringing gifts of candy, books, or roasting chickens.<sup>34</sup> He grew so close to “his widows” that he made yearly visits to many of them long after being released as bishop, even managing to speak at all 85 funerals during his tenure as a General



**Leaders gathered for a photo with Elder Monson following a priesthood meeting in the newly established Dresden Mission in East Germany.**

Authority.<sup>35</sup> “My inadequacy humbled me,” he recalled of the five years he served as bishop; but he was grateful that “I developed very young in life a spirit of compassion for others who might be in need, regardless of age or circumstance.”<sup>36</sup> He ministered to everyone in his ward boundaries, including those of other faiths, and sought out less-active members even when it meant going to a gas station one Sunday morning where he encouraged a young man working in a grease pit to return to his quorum meetings.<sup>37</sup>

This particular calling also imparted a difficult lesson. While attending a stake

leadership meeting, Bishop Monson felt a strong prompting to leave at once to visit an older ward member being treated at the veterans’ hospital. Unfortunately, the stake president was speaking, so the young bishop impatiently waited until he finished before rushing to the hospital. As he ran to the man’s room, a nurse stopped him. She asked, “Are you Bishop Monson?” and proceeded to tell him that “the patient was asking for you just before he died.”<sup>38</sup> Bishop Monson drove home that night vowing to never again fail to act on a prompting from the Holy Ghost, a commitment reflected over and over again in the remainder of his Church service.

He went on to serve as a counselor in the stake presidency at age 27 and as a mission president in Canada in 1959, at age 31. Missionaries under his guidance remember a leader so in tune with the Spirit that he often followed impressions to visit a missionary’s apartment just before the missionary was about to do something wrong.<sup>39</sup> He focused on the missionaries by learning all of their names, counseling with them about their problems and concerns, and essentially doing everything he could to prevent early departures and disciplinary councils. By this time, the Monson family had grown to include two young children, Thomas Lee and Ann Frances. A third child, Clark Spencer, was born in Canada. The family enjoyed more time together on this mission assignment than they were accustomed to, and Tom developed a loyalty to Canada still apparent in 2010, when, as President of the Church, he dedicated the Canada Vancouver Temple with a Canadian flag on his lapel and changed the opening song to “O Canada.”<sup>40</sup>



**Called to preach the gospel “in all the world” (D&C 107:23), Elder Monson traveled to Germany (above) and the South Pacific (below).**







**President Monson served as a counselor to three Church Presidents, including Presidents Gordon B. Hinckley and Ezra Taft Benson. At age 10, he gave his first talk at this pulpit (above right). Since 2008 his counselors in the First Presidency were Henry B. Eyring and Dieter F. Uchtdorf.**



Upon returning home to Salt Lake City, Tom became general manager of the Deseret Press, and Frances busied herself with raising children, serving in ward callings, and supporting her husband as he served on various general Church priesthood committees.

Tom's extensive involvement in Church committees such as Adult Correlation, Missionary, or Genealogy, in fact, led him to believe that an invitation to President David O. McKay's office would somehow be related to his current assignment. It was not. President McKay extended the call to serve as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, replacing Elder N. Eldon Tanner, who had been called as a counselor in the First Presidency. Tom felt so overwhelmed and surprised he couldn't speak. Finally, he assured President McKay that "any talent with which I might have been blessed would be extended in the service of the Master in putting my very life on the line if necessary."<sup>41</sup>

President Monson agreed to keep the sacred call confidential to everyone except his wife, and did not sleep at all the night before general conference on October 4, 1963. Upon arriving at conference, he sat among the members

of the Priesthood Home Teaching committee on which he served. A friend next to him, Hugh Smith, told him of a strange coincidence: the last two times a General Authority had been called, that man had been sitting next to Hugh.<sup>42</sup> After Thomas Monson's name was called, "Hugh Smith looked at me and said simply, 'Lightning has struck for the third time.' I believe the walk from the audience to the stand was the longest walk of my life."<sup>43</sup>

### **Service as a Member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles**

Thomas S. Monson, at age 36, became the youngest man called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles since 1910, when Joseph Fielding Smith joined the Quorum at age 33. His service with the Twelve spanned 22 years, from 1963 until his call to the First Presidency under President Ezra Taft Benson in 1985, and included service on every major committee of the Church, frequently as the chair.<sup>44</sup> During this time, Church membership evolved from a homogeneous group centered in the western United States into a worldwide, highly diverse global community.<sup>45</sup> He was called to the apostleship by President David O. McKay but went on to serve under President Joseph Fielding Smith from 1970 to 1972 and then under Harold B. Lee from 1972 to 1973. It was during President Spencer W. Kimball's tenure, from 1973 to 1985, that President Monson led a scripture publications committee that in 1979 produced a 2,400-page edition of the King James Version of the Bible that included a Topical Guide, Bible Dictionary, and pioneering footnote system. President Monson also participated with President Kimball in the landmark revelation that all worthy male members would receive the priesthood.<sup>46</sup>

But to members confined behind the Iron Curtain throughout the post-World War II years, President Monson's greatest accomplishment as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was his overseeing of the Eastern European Saints. "The actual blessings he brought to our country and to Europe," observed German First Presidency member Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "are so real and so





*President Monson often paused to greet members after sessions of general conference.*





**Above:** A girl joined President Monson in applying mortar to a temple cornerstone. **Below:** At his alma mater, he received a game ball.



significant and so singular in their value that I really believe that the Lord had prepared him to be an instrument in changing the history of Germany.”<sup>47</sup> The Communist government of the German Democratic Republic severely repressed religious observance, yet Church members continued faithful despite discrimination, loss of job and educational opportunities, and frequent surveillance as they met together. President Monson visited them frequently, once studying the entire Church handbook with the intent of retyping the entire book after crossing into East Germany because Church materials were not allowed to be taken into the country. He went to a branch office and started this task, and after several pages he glanced around and discovered a copy of the handbook on a shelf behind him.<sup>48</sup> He worked tirelessly with East German officials to allow at least a few Saints to attend general conference and to visit the temple outside the country, but still East German Saints yearned for opportunities akin to those of other members around the world.

Then, in 1978, President Kimball promised President Monson that “the Lord will not deny temple blessings to those worthy [East German] members” and added with a smile, “You find the way.”<sup>49</sup> As President Monson and East German Church leader Henry Burkhardt continued to petition the government for permission for six couples at a time to visit the Swiss Temple, they received an astounding suggestion from government leaders: “Why don’t you build a temple here?” In October 1982, the First Presidency announced that a temple would be built in Freiberg, German Democratic Republic, the first temple ever constructed in a Communist

country. This announcement was almost as inconceivable as the miraculous agreement President Monson, then-Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and East German Church leaders later made with government officials and head of state Erich Honecker to allow mis-



**Youth with special needs were thrilled at a cultural celebration in Laie, Hawaii, when President Monson took a moment to greet them individually.**

sionaries to enter and leave the country before the collapse of the Berlin Wall.<sup>50</sup> “I am a living witness,” wrote President Monson, “of how the hand of the Lord has been made manifest in watching over the members of the Church in what once were Communist-ruled countries.”<sup>51</sup>

Yet, amidst world-changing events and overwhelming administrative duties, President Monson’s ministry continued to focus on the promptings of the Holy Ghost and on reaching out to the one. After offering a blessing to a friend in a veterans’ hospital, President Monson felt he had “accomplished more good



in that visit than in a week of meetings at Church headquarters.”<sup>52</sup> Stories abound of detours taken from General Authority duties as President Monson retreated to hospital rooms, nursing homes, and solitary bedsides to visit the sick and the lonely waiting for him. When stake meeting schedules in Shreveport, Louisiana, wouldn’t allow President Monson time to visit a terminally ill girl who had asked for a blessing from him, he was nevertheless prepared when, during the Saturday evening leadership session, “I heard a voice speak to my spirit,” he said. “The message was brief, the words familiar: ‘Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God’ (Mark 10:14).”<sup>53</sup> He made the 80-mile (129 km) trip to Christal Methvin’s home the next morning, blessing her in a Spirit-filled family gathering before she died four days later.

When meeting with impoverished East German members, President Monson would give away his suits, shoes, calculator, and even a set of marked scriptures.<sup>54</sup> And he never forgot his fellow members from the Sixth-Seventh Ward, watching out for aging and low-income friends like Ed Erickson, whom President Monson invited to family gatherings and initiated birthday celebrations for. In a 2009 talk, he taught: “Have the courage to refrain from judging and criticizing those around you, as well as the courage to make certain everyone is included and feels loved and valued.”<sup>55</sup>

President Monson’s honesty and friendliness engendered bridge-building and goodwill for the Church among various religions, civic organizations, and community leaders. He had grown up in a diverse neighborhood, felt close to relatives of different faiths, and genuinely

professed, “I think there are good people everywhere.”<sup>56</sup> He mingled readily with others, “many of whom are not necessarily members of the Church,” he observed, “but are community spirited and civic minded individuals.”<sup>57</sup> Community leaders like one former publisher of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, a Catholic, voiced their appreciation: “If he’s ever met you, Tom Monson is your friend. . . . The Church



**President Monson, with his wife, Frances, waves from his place as grand marshal in the 2005 Days of '47 parade in Salt Lake City, Utah.**

gave this community special unification through friendship when it elevated Tom Monson to the First Presidency.”<sup>58</sup> A Salt Lake community advocate once observed, “I don’t know if people know how much the LDS Church gets involved with the nonprofit world. President Monson is very aware of what the needs are.”<sup>59</sup> Another faith leader wrote to President Monson: “You always open your heart to meet the needs and requests of the Salvation Army. Certainly you and your associates have overwhelmed us with your warmth and gra-

cious spirits.”<sup>60</sup> He attended and spoke at activities held in conjunction with the 1993 dedication services of the restored Cathedral of the Madeleine in Salt Lake City and also spoke at Catholic funerals for close friends.<sup>61</sup>

Hobbies like pigeon-raising offered respite from the pressures of President Monson’s duties and inspired his great-grandchildren to call him “Grandpa Birdie.” His passion for raising pigeons was reflected in a merit badge on pigeon-raising offered by the Boy Scouts of America for a time. His service on the Scouts’ National Executive Board began in 1969 and continued through the years as he received the Silver Beaver Award, the Silver Buffalo Award, and international Scouting’s highest award, the Bronze Wolf, in 1993. However, one former chief Scout executive,



**At Boy Scout jamborees and other gatherings, President Monson mingled with young men to remind them of their heritage and responsibilities.**

Roy Williams, joked that President Monson couldn't quite get over the Scouts' decision to abandon a pigeon-raising merit badge.<sup>62</sup>

President Monson's interests ranged broadly. While a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, he earned a master's degree in business administration, and throughout his travels he liked to visit military cemeteries—hallowed places that evoke, he said, thoughts of “shattered dreams, unfulfilled hopes, grief-filled hearts and lives cut short by the sharp scythe of war.”<sup>63</sup> He loved to study about World War II and, on a lighter note, relished *Perry Mason* reruns on television at night, though he sometimes fell asleep and missed the ending.<sup>64</sup> He was fond, too, of musicals. “I am what my wife, Frances, calls a ‘show-a-holic,’” he once told a general conference audience.<sup>65</sup> He also enjoyed his share of New Year's Day football games in which “I can start out neutral watching two football teams, but within minutes I have selected the team which I think ought to win.”<sup>66</sup> He could talk about chickens for an entire flight with a seatmate and, at a Boy Scouts of America prayer breakfast at the White House in 1989, found a shared love of English springer spaniels with United States president George Bush.<sup>67</sup>

His deepest interest, of course, was his



**For his decades of service to the Boy Scouts of America, President Monson was given Scouting's highest award and had a Scout building named after him.**







*Filipino members enjoy hearing President Monson play the piano at the Cebu City Philippines Temple cornerstone ceremony.*

family, which grew to include 8 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. While his time at home was limited, his children remember playing games, fishing, duck hunting, weeding gardens, going to movies, swimming, and sleigh riding with their father.<sup>68</sup> Two particular memories stand out for son Tom: playing checkers as a young boy with his father and having his father fly to Louisville, Kentucky, to give him a blessing because he had contracted pneumonia during military basic training.<sup>69</sup> Daughter Ann enjoyed the Sunday evening reports her father shared with the family after returning from Church assignments. And Clark especially cherished the day his father drove 40 miles (64 km) out of his way so that he and Clark could examine a hawk's nest near Randolph, Utah.<sup>70</sup> President Monson relished mowing the lawn and participating in family Ping-Pong tournaments in the basement of their home.<sup>71</sup>

### **Member of the First Presidency**

Thomas S. Monson served for 22 years in the First Presidency, starting in 1985 as Second Counselor to President Ezra Taft Benson and then continuing in that role with President Howard W. Hunter in 1994. Thirteen of those years, from 1995 to 2008, were at the side of President Gordon B. Hinckley, who called President Monson to be his First Counselor.<sup>72</sup> President Monson's tenure in the First Presidency drew on his varied background in Church administration and left him with a heavy workload that made it difficult to leave the office. President Hinckley became the most traveled President in Church history, and this particular administration kept extremely

busy. Smaller temples enabled the pace of temple building to rapidly increase; an enormous new Church Conference Center was constructed to enable thousands of members to attend general conference and other functions; worldwide training meetings via satellite broadcast began; and a Day of Celebration in Rice-Eccles Stadium at the University of Utah commemorated the 200th birthday of the Prophet Joseph Smith, with 42,000 youth from Salt Lake Valley and Wyoming performing.<sup>73</sup>

As always, though, in the words of Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, President Monson was “never too busy for people,”<sup>74</sup> and in the winter of 2000, one person he took time out for was his wife. After she suffered a severe fall, he spent several weeks taking his paperwork to her hospital room until, finally, Frances became alert enough to voice her first words: “I forgot to mail the quarterly tax payment.”<sup>75</sup>

Another recipient of his kindness was *Church News* reporter Gerry Avant, who frequently covered President Monson’s travels and was once invited to some sightseeing with the Monsons because, as President Monson told her, “you’ve been working hard.”<sup>76</sup>

### President of the Church

President Gordon B. Hinckley died on January 27, 2008. The First Presidency was dissolved and President Monson returned to his position as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The man who grew up near the railroad tracks, instigated mischievous childhood antics in Primary, and willingly shared his meager belongings even during the Great Depression would soon become the leader of

millions of Latter-day Saints worldwide. “I’ve never speculated on what might lie down the road for anything in my life,” he said in an interview shortly before he was to be sustained as President of the Church in a solemn assembly during the April 2008 general conference. “I didn’t know but what President Hinckley would outlive me.” He said, “I’ve always followed the philosophy, ‘Serve where you’re

called, not where you’ve been or where you might be. Serve where you’re called.’”<sup>77</sup>

Thomas S. Monson was set apart and ordained as the 16th President of the Church on February 3, 2008, choosing President Henry B. Eyring to serve as his First Counselor. For his Second Counselor, he chose President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, a multilingual German convert to the Church and a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles since 2004. The new First Presidency symbolized the global nature of the expanding Church.<sup>78</sup> At

a press conference on February 4, 2008, President Monson told reporters, “As a Church we reach out not only to our own people, but also to those people of goodwill throughout the world in that spirit of brotherhood which comes from the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>79</sup>

This spirit of brotherhood and reaching out to others became hallmarks of President Monson’s administration. Church leaders worked regularly with Catholics, Evangelical Christians, and other religious and community groups in humanitarian work and supporting moral causes. Church leaders invited other faith leaders to speak at LDS campuses and bolstered support for religious freedom with online resources.<sup>80</sup> President Monson and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles also encouraged Church



**President Monson pauses for a photo during intermission at a Mormon Tabernacle Choir concert near Denver, Colorado, USA.**



members to reach out to other faiths in service and community building and enhanced already existing humanitarian connections with other institutions to relieve the staggering needs of people affected by natural and man-made disasters worldwide. During the first seven years of President Monson's tenure,



***After the new First Presidency was announced in February 2008, President Monson and his counselors spoke to the press.***

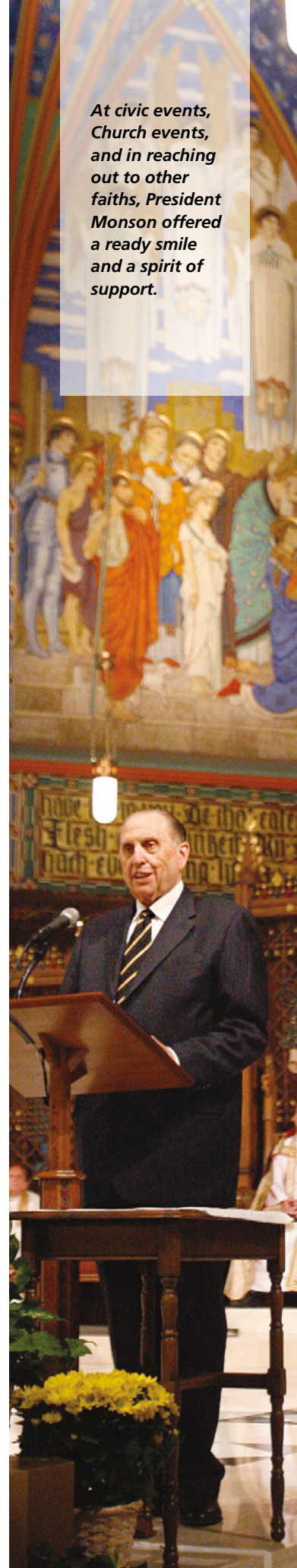
the Church contributed to relief efforts in the aftermath of earthquakes in Haiti and Nepal, a Japanese tsunami, and floods in Thailand. It also offered help in immunizing people in underdeveloped countries, providing clean water to remote villages, easing food crises internationally, and offering disaster relief in the United States. This global aid and influence was noted by Slate.com, which in 2009 ranked President Monson first in a list of the 80 most powerful octogenarians in America.<sup>81</sup>

Also under President Monson's leadership, Church public relations began an outreach to help others better understand the diversity

of Latter-day Saints. The "I'm a Mormon" campaign featured Latter-day Saints who worked for such diverse organizations as Harley Davidson, the Library of Congress, and rock bands. Church headquarters also launched websites for youth and others, and the Church-owned BYUtv channel and website began producing critically acclaimed programs to appeal to a wider audience. On the Church's website, a series of high-quality videos began appearing, showing scenes from the New Testament that could be appreciated by people of many faiths. Other online resources included the publication of several Gospel Topics essays, designed to address complex issues in a straightforward and scholarly manner, and the website Mormon and Gay, providing relevant Church teachings and featuring personal stories from gay Latter-day Saints and their families.

Perhaps the most substantial changes that transpired during President Monson's tenure, however, took place in historic administrative developments. Significant changes impacted the way the Church leads, functions, teaches, and proselytes. In 2009 the Church distributed a DVD and pamphlet on welfare principles and in 2010 released a new handbook of instructions for Church leaders, accompanied by two worldwide training broadcasts. The new handbook stressed working in councils through open and honest discussions, alleviating the load of the bishop through delegation, and, most important, helping Church members become true disciples of Jesus Christ. Also in 2010, international training by members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles began implementing priesthood leadership conferences and area reviews that included a

***At civic events, Church events, and in reaching out to other faiths, President Monson offered a ready smile and a spirit of support.***



comprehensive overview of humanitarian service, welfare needs, missionary work, and temple work.

One of the most dramatic developments to occur under President Monson's direction was announced in the October 2012 general conference when President Monson declared that men could begin serving full-time missions at age 18 and women at 19. This unprecedented policy change lowering age requirements Churchwide generated an eagerness for missionary work that resulted in historically high numbers of men and especially women serving full-time missions. The creation of new missionary training centers and new missions accompanied the rising number of missionaries, which reached 85,000 at the end of 2014. Members became part of the "hastening of the work" (see D&C 88:73) as well, better preparing sons and daughters for missions within the home and participating more fully in their local missionary programs. Technology and online proselyting, as well as the creation of "sister training leaders"—a leadership role for sister missionaries—also added to the exhilarating sense of progress and innovation that the mission-age-change announcement created.

Enabling young women to serve missions at younger ages dovetailed with an ongoing effort during President Monson's tenure to better involve women in leadership roles, decision making, and ward and stake council participation. To better help Latter-day Saint women and men appreciate the crucial role sisters have played in the gospel in every dispensation—especially during the Savior's ministry and during the Restoration period from 1830 to the present—the Church published *Daughters in My Kingdom* and encouraged its use in the home, in Relief Society and Young Women, and

in quorums. In 2014 the general women's session of general conference replaced the general Relief Society and Young Women meetings, with all females ages 8 and older invited to attend this twice-a-year meeting.

Better and more interactive teaching methods, especially in helping youth become full participants in the gospel, also became a priority of President Monson's administrative

innovations. The 2013 implementation of *Come, Follow Me*, a youth curriculum designed to "bless the youth in their efforts to become fully converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ,"<sup>82</sup> offered teachers and youth alike better ways to teach as Jesus Christ did. It used online resources, youth participation, and Spirit-inspired discussions in building faith and gospel understanding. Similar efforts to improve all teaching in the Church came in 2016 with the new resource *Teaching in the Savior's Way*



**President and Sister Monson celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in 2008.**

and the introduction of monthly teacher council meetings in wards and branches.

Also during President Monson's administration, announcements of new temples to be built throughout the world continued. Temple dedications and rededications saw President Monson traveling to locales around the globe, including Cebu City, Philippines; Curitiba, Brazil; Kyiv, Ukraine; Panama City, Panama; and Kansas City, Missouri. In 2013 the introduction of online resources to help members find their ancestors resulted in an 11 percent increase in family names submitted by members for temple ordinances in what was called "a banner year for family history."<sup>83</sup>

Despite the heavy demands on his time, however, President Monson remained Thomas Monson, the Church leader who, in the words of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the



Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “will show up, probably unannounced, at the funeral of a rank-and-file employee. I can’t think of anything that exemplifies more the ministry of President Monson than that kind of individualized attention.”<sup>84</sup>

On May 23, 2013, he presided at the funeral of his own beloved wife, Frances, after she passed away on May 17 in a Salt Lake hospital. “She has been supportive from the day we married,” said President Monson at the services, calling her “the ideal wife and mother.”<sup>85</sup> He fulfilled the remainder of his presidency as a widower, often accompanied to special events by his daughter, Ann.

During President Monson’s tenure, improved Sabbath day observance was emphasized as a means of increasing faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Beginning in 2015, a coordinated and sustained effort at all levels of the Church and in the home urged members to “make the Sabbath a delight” (see Isaiah 58:13) by focusing on the Lord and their covenants with Him in order to reap the blessings promised to the faithful.

President Monson also continued to remain aware of those estranged from the Church and never treated them as unfit for the kingdom. When an older man who had not been involved in the Church for 20 years came to a General Authority for advice on coming back, he pulled out the letter that had motivated his own desire to return: “You have been long enough away, and it is time to come back. Tom.”<sup>86</sup> According to President Monson, “I find there is a little bit of sainthood in everybody, and I look for it.”<sup>87</sup>

Even as President of the Church, he maintained his sense of comradeship with others, said Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “He’ll

talk about the BYU game or the Jazz [basketball team]; he’s a great sports fan. And then he’ll get down to business.”<sup>88</sup> And he always maintained his sense of humor. At a 2009 gathering with the members of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, he sat down at the gigantic organ and offered up his rendition of “To a Birthday Party” from a beginner’s piano book.<sup>89</sup> In 2013 the Church celebrated its “100 Years of

Scouting” with a program that also paid homage to President Monson’s lifelong support of Scouting—just one of many interests that kept him connected to his fellow beings, whom he loved to comfort and make happier, inviting all Scouters, regardless of religious affiliation, to participate.

“Feeling the nudge of the Lord, the promptings,” President Monson said in a 1997 interview, brought him the most joy, especially in situations like the one in which he had visited his father in the hospital and, rushing

afterward to get to his next meeting, felt he should nevertheless wait near the elevator. A family asked him to offer a blessing to their mother, who was struggling between life and death, and he agreed. Later that day he received word that each family member had kissed the mother and said a peaceful good-bye after the blessing and before she died.<sup>90</sup>

“I’ve had that happen to me all through my life to the extent that I try to keep the antennae up,” President Monson observed. And countless individuals—some of whose stories have been told, but many more whose encounters with Thomas Monson remain unknown—can attest to this remarkable man’s connection with the divine. “You develop an appreciation that Heavenly Father knows who you are,” reflected President Monson. “He says, ‘Here, go do this for me.’ I always thank Him.”<sup>91</sup>



***President and Sister Monson and their daughter exit a general conference session.***

And his witness to the world was unailing. “With all my heart and the fervency of my soul,” said President Monson, “I lift up my voice in testimony as a special witness and declare that God does live. Jesus is His Son, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. He is our Redeemer; He is our Mediator with the Father. He it

was who died on the cross to atone for our sins. He became the firstfruits of the Resurrection. Because He died, all shall live again. ‘Oh, sweet the joy this sentence gives: “I know that my Redeemer lives!”’ [Hymns, no. 136]. May the whole world know it and live by that knowledge.”<sup>92</sup> ■

#### NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 92.
2. Email correspondence with Gregory Parkin, M.D., Sept. 2, 2008.
3. In “A Life Guided by Service,” *Deseret News*, general conference special supplement, Apr. 1, 2008, 4; see also Jeffrey R. Holland, “President Thomas S. Monson: Man of Action, Man of Faith, Always ‘on the Lord’s Errand,’” *Ensign*, Feb. 1986, 12.
4. Tom Monson, son, email to Joshua Perkey, Church Magazines, Feb. 19, 2008.
5. In Heidi S. Swinton, *To the Rescue: The Biography of Thomas S. Monson* (2010), 518.
6. Gerry Avant, “President’s Heartfelt Efforts Universal,” *Deseret News*, Feb. 7, 2008, M6.
7. In “A Life Guided by Service,” 4.
8. In “Speaking from Experience,” *Deseret News*, Feb. 7, 2008, M4.
9. In Carrie A. Moore, “LDS Leader Has Fond Memories of Growing Up in the S.L. Area,” *Deseret News*, Feb. 5, 2008, M3.
10. In Gerry Avant, “On Lord’s Errand since His Boyhood,” *Church News*, Feb. 9, 2008, 5.
11. Much of the biographical information in this article is taken from Swinton, *To the Rescue*.
12. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 50–51.
13. See Heidi S. Swinton, “Baseballs and Service,” *Friend*, Sept. 2012, 2.
14. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 35.
15. In Jeffrey R. Holland, “President Thomas S. Monson: In the Footsteps of the Master,” supplement to the *Ensign* and *Liahona*, June 2008, 5.
16. In “In His Own Words,” *Deseret News*, general conference special supplement, Apr. 1, 2008, 7.
17. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 58.
18. See Thomas S. Monson, “Obedience Brings Blessings,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 89–90.
19. See Moore, “LDS Leader Has Fond Memories,” M3; “A Life Guided by Service,” 5.
20. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 74–75.
21. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 63–65.
22. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 78.
23. In Moore, “LDS Leader Has Fond Memories,” M3.
24. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 79, 87.
25. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 89, 288.
26. In Moore, “LDS Leader Has Fond Memories,” M3.
27. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 90.
28. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 92.
29. Thomas S. Monson, “Dare to Stand Alone,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 61.
30. In “Speaking from Experience,” M5.
31. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 99.
32. In Moore, “LDS Leader Has Fond Memories,” M3.
33. In “A Life Guided by Service,” 5.
34. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 144.
35. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 142.
36. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 132.
37. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 158–59.
38. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 135–36.
39. See Gary Bell, in “Recollecting,” *Deseret News*, Feb. 5, 2008, M3.
40. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 175–76.
41. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 216.
42. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 217–18.
43. In “In His Own Words,” 17.
44. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 252.
45. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 224.
46. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 530–32.
47. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 279.
48. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 293–94.
49. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 309.
50. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 309, 313, 333–34.
51. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 340.
52. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 405.
53. In Jeffrey R. Holland, “In the Footsteps of the Master,” 11.
54. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 316.
55. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 248.
56. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 464.
57. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 401.
58. John W. Gallivan, in Jeffrey R. Holland, “Man of Action, Man of Faith,” 15.
59. Pamela Atkinson, in “Recollecting,” M3.
60. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 440.
61. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 402–3, 453.
62. See Joseph F. Dougherty, “LDS Leader Also Lifelong Scouter,” *Deseret News*, Feb. 7, 2008, M6.
63. In “In His Own Words,” 20.
64. Ann Dibb, email to Joshua Perkey, Church Magazines, Feb. 13, 2008.
65. Thomas S. Monson, “Finding Joy in the Journey,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 85.
66. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 452.
67. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 463–64, 453.
68. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 200.
69. See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Man of Action, Man of Faith,” 16–17.
70. See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Man of Action, Man of Faith,” 17.
71. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 265.
72. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 532–33.
73. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 471, 472, 478, 484, 485.
74. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 485.
75. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 492.
76. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 487.
77. Gerry Avant, “Church President to Be Sustained in Solemn Assembly,” *Church News*, Apr. 5, 2008, 3–4; see also [lds.org/church/news/oct-4-is-president-monsons-50-year-anniversary-as-apostle](http://lds.org/church/news/oct-4-is-president-monsons-50-year-anniversary-as-apostle).
78. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 496.
79. Thomas S. Monson, “The Lord’s Work,” *Church News*, Feb. 9, 2008, 3.
80. See “Church Launches New Resources on Freedom of Religion,” [mormonnewsroom.org/article/religious-freedom-resources](http://mormonnewsroom.org/article/religious-freedom-resources).
81. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 515.
82. First Presidency letter, Sept. 12, 2012.
83. Paul G. Nauta, “2013 Was a Banner Year for Family History,” [lds.org/church/news/2013-was-a-banner-year-for-family-history](http://lds.org/church/news/2013-was-a-banner-year-for-family-history).
84. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 502.
85. Gerry Avant, “Sister Frances J. Monson Was ‘the Ideal Wife and Mother,’” [lds.org/church/news/sister-frances-j-monson-was-the-ideal-wife-and-mother](http://lds.org/church/news/sister-frances-j-monson-was-the-ideal-wife-and-mother).
86. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 504.
87. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 504.
88. In Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 512.
89. See Swinton, *To the Rescue*, 515.
90. Gerry Avant, “Oct. 4 Is President Monson’s 50-Year Anniversary as Apostle,” [lds.org/church/news/oct-4-is-president-monsons-50-year-anniversary-as-apostle](http://lds.org/church/news/oct-4-is-president-monsons-50-year-anniversary-as-apostle).
91. In Avant, “Oct. 4 Is President Monson’s 50-Year Anniversary as Apostle,” [lds.org/church/news/oct-4-is-president-monsons-50-year-anniversary-as-apostle](http://lds.org/church/news/oct-4-is-president-monsons-50-year-anniversary-as-apostle).
92. Thomas S. Monson, “I Know That My Redeemer Lives!” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 25.



## MEMORIAL SERVICES

A public viewing for President Thomas S. Monson was held in the Conference Center on January 11, 2018 (below). Funeral services were held the next day in the Conference Center. A private burial service followed that afternoon at the Salt Lake City Cemetery.







# A LEGACY OF LOVE AND SERVICE

BY ANN M. DIBB

President Monson's Daughter

It is a blessing for me to stand before you this day and offer remarks in remembrance of my father, President Thomas Spencer Monson, 16th President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Today this Conference Center is filled with your love and prayers. I thank you for your presence and support.

As a family, we wish to thank the numerous individuals who have blessed our father with their service and care. We offer sincere thanks to President Henry B. Eyring and President Dieter F. Uchtdorf. We thank each member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. We also thank the many other General Authorities and Officers of the Church. President Monson's office staff and other employees are unsurpassed. My father's security

team, notably Tracy Monson and Dan Stephens, with their professionalism and concern have provided exceptional service. We offer a special thanks to his nursing personnel, especially Sister Aleese Walker. We are grateful for my father's dedicated physical therapists, dentists, and doctors, including his internist, Dr. Russell Maxwell. You have all been remarkable in your unwavering compassion and care.

I want to thank my husband, Roger, and our children for supporting me as I served my father and their grandfather.

Dear Father, it has been a sacred blessing and an honor to watch after you as my devoted mother requested. I know we have had "angels round about [us], to bear [us] up."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, I want to thank you, the membership of the Church. Your 54 years of daily prayers, offered as my father served as an Apostle and then as the President of the Church, have made a difference.

Today I am profoundly grateful for my father and the legacy he created—a legacy of love and service. Although he was a prophet, my father knew he was not perfect. With all his heart, he humbly relied on and tried to be like our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. About a year ago, he was working at his office. A copy of the *Ensign* magazine was open, and there displayed was his picture. My father pointed to the picture and said, "I know that guy. He tried his best."





## A Legacy of Love

President Monson, by simply “trying his best,” left an unforgettable legacy of *love*. He loved the Lord and he loved people. He saw our potential and believed sincerely in our ability to change and progress through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

He loved his parents, siblings, and extended family. He loved his dear eternal companion—his beautiful, quiet, faithful supporter and enabler, Frances. He loved his family and each of his eastern Canadian missionaries. He especially loved his grandchildren. Despite his busy schedule, he created countless memories with them. He was genuinely interested in each of their lives.

Complete strangers also felt President Monson’s love. Once, while visiting a local nursing care facility, he shook the hand of a man in a wheelchair. The man looked up and timidly said, “President Monson, you have shaken my hand, but I need an embrace.” Without hesitation, Dad bent down and tenderly embraced this dear man.

My dad would often recite the Savior’s great commandment:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”<sup>2</sup>



He also chose to live this commandment each and every day.

## A Legacy of Service

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, William Shakespeare wisely wrote, “They do not love that do not show their love.”<sup>3</sup> My father understood this well and showed his love for others by following the Savior’s example: “[He] went about doing good, . . . for God was with him.”<sup>4</sup> My father spent his entire life serving others.

I was privileged to be my father’s companion on many of his personal visits. We regularly visited a lifelong friend, 98-year-old Elder Glen Rudd. Once, a little too much time had passed between our visits. One day a secretary in my father’s office answered a phone call from Elder Rudd. He asked, “Is President Monson out visiting the sick, the afflicted, and the aged? If so, I qualify!” We quickly responded with a visit to his home. After the visit, Dad turned with a smile on his face and



**Family members wear yellow roses in honor of President Monson's favorite color.**

said, "Ann, I feel we've done some good today."

My father's desire to serve others often went beyond his capacity to do so, considering his many responsibilities. Undaunted, he found a solution: he'd enlist others to provide the needed service on his behalf. He would call carefully selected individuals and say, "Is this my friend Mac? This is Tom. How would you like to paint a bright spot on your soul today?" Translated, this meant that President Monson needed a "service-favor." "Mac" was only too happy to comply.

We do not need to be the President of the Church to notice another's need and "paint a bright spot on our souls." My dad acted upon his frequent feeling, "That would be a kind thing to do," only to find it was the answer to another's prayer. By following the promptings of the Spirit, our simple acts of service can also be answers to prayers, and we can carry on this legacy by serving others.

A little over a year ago, my father and I visited another longtime friend, who was 94 years old

and gravely ill. In a booming voice, my father said, "Is that my friend Brent Goates?" Brother Goates opened his eyes and said with great effort and emotion, "Tom, you came. Wonderful. Wonderful."

My dad explained, "Brent, there is no place I would rather be than right here with you. It's where the Lord would have me be." My father spoke with him as though they were both young again and Brent was a vibrant, capable man; he then gave Brother Goates a priesthood blessing. As we left and walked down the sidewalk to the car, my father said, "The Lord gave us the priesthood to serve and to bless others. This is a great blessing to visit my friend and let him know he is remembered. I feel we've done some good today, Ann." That day my father couldn't stop smiling. He was whistling. He was happy.

Watching him, I realized my dad knew how to obtain true joy. Through his devoted service, he had learned that joy comes from loving the Lord and serving your neighbor. This joy is available to each of us. There is no better way to honor my

father, the prophet, and our Savior Jesus Christ than to live every day so that at its close we can truly say, "I feel I've done some good today."

I have a testimony. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true. I know God lives and loves His children. Thank you to all who have loved and honored my father, President Thomas Spencer Monson. May each of us continue to follow the Lord's prophet. May we look to Christ, our perfect Lord and Redeemer, as our everlasting example. It is my sincere prayer that my dear father, and someday all of us, will hear these words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord."<sup>5</sup>

I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 84:88.
2. Matthew 22:37–39.
3. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. William Aldis Wright, Cambridge edition (1936), act 1, scene 2, line 31.
4. Acts 10:38.
5. Matthew 25:21.



# A PROPHET FOR OUR TIME

BY PRESIDENT DIETER F. UCHTDORF

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

I am deeply honored and grateful for the privilege to pay tribute to President Thomas S. Monson, a prophet of God and my cherished friend.

At this tender time, feelings and thoughts run deep and words are inadequate to express my love, gratitude, and sorrow.

Harriet and I express our heartfelt sympathy, condolences, and gratitude to the family, to all who love him, and to the many who so tenderly cared for him. A special word of gratitude goes to Ann Monson Dibb, President Monson's daughter. After the death of President Monson's beloved wife, Frances, Ann's dedicated service, supported by her siblings and family, greatly blessed President Monson in the winter days of his life.

How much I miss him! I considered him a friend long before I met him. I believe that all who knew him, heard him, or saw him, even if only from a distance, considered themselves his friends.

As Sister Uchtdorf and I traveled the world, people would convey their love, gratitude, and prayers to their beloved prophet. These heartfelt greetings came from the young, the elderly, and all the ages in between.

Thomas S. Monson was a man for all seasons, truly a spiritual giant. He abounded in knowledge, faith, love, vision, testimony, courage, and compassion—leading and serving never from a pedestal, but always eye to eye. He had a special place in his heart for the poor and the needy. We will miss his voice, his steadiness, his confidence in the Lord, his smile, his wit, his enthusiasm, his optimism, and his stories, which I consider parables of a modern prophet of God.



It is now 24 years ago when President Monson invited Harriet and me to his office and called me to serve as a General Authority of the Church. Harriet and I struggled to cope with the significance of the moment and its far-reaching impact for our lives.

However, President Monson's warmth, personal interest, encouragement, enthusiasm for the work, and prophetic dignity made us feel calm and at peace. We felt we were in the presence of one who knew the Savior, who

was His servant, who was known by our Heavenly Father.

Germany and its people were especially blessed by President Monson. His strong faith helped to stretch ours during the Cold War years. He not only brought suitcases filled with clothes and other things for the members in East Germany, but his powerful apostolic prayer given in 1975 promised unthinkable spiritual blessings. President Monson came back with then-Elder Russell M. Nelson and followed up on these

divine promises. They were all fulfilled, step by step. A prophet of God had spoken, and God honored His servant's faith and work.

When Harriet and I accompanied President Monson to a conference in Hamburg, he asked about Michael Panitsch, a former stake president and patriarch, one of the stalwart pioneers of the Church in Germany. Brother Panitsch was

the bedridden brother, and President Monson gave him a wonderful priesthood blessing, thanked him for his life of dedicated service, and cheered him up with a smile.

Whenever I think about this experience, I am reminded of what the Apostle Peter said of Jesus, his friend and teacher: "[He] went about doing good."<sup>1</sup>

about to leave after a visit in the prophet's home, President Monson stopped us and said, "I love the Savior Jesus Christ. And I know that He loves me." What a tender and powerful testimony by the prophet of God.

President Monson was truly a prophet for our time. He was a man for all seasons. All that we know and love about President Thomas S.



***The General Auxiliary Presidencies stand as the casket leaves the Conference Center.***

seriously ill, bedridden, and unable to attend our meetings. Nevertheless, President Monson wanted to visit him.

Just prior, President Monson had undergone foot surgery and could hardly walk without pain. Brother Panitsch lived on the fifth floor of a building with no elevators. We would have to climb many steep steps. Yet President Monson insisted, so we went.

It was a very painful climb for President Monson, but he cheerfully went on. We reached

The same can be said of the man we love, respect, and sustained as the prophet of God, our friend and God's friend, Thomas Spencer Monson.

It has been a most satisfying and spiritually rewarding experience to serve as one of President Monson's counselors in the First Presidency of the Church. It has included happiness and heartache, laughter and sorrow, deep conversations, and many inspired prophetic moments.

Recently, as President Eyring and I were

Monson will continue. His spirit has gone home to God, our Father in Heaven, who gave him life. Wherever I go in this beautiful world, a part of this cherished friend will always go with me.

I offer an affectionate farewell to our beloved prophet: Thank you, President Thomas S. Monson. May God be with you till we meet again. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer, amen. ■

**NOTE**

1. Acts 10:38.



# A CARING AND COURAGEOUS PROPHET

BY PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING

First Counselor in the First Presidency

I am honored to have been invited to speak at the funeral of a mighty prophet of God, President Thomas S. Monson. My heart is drawn out to his family and to all who mourn his passing. There are millions of people across the earth who share that sense of loss. He was loved by those who knew him from his stirring and inspiring talks and his leadership. The number of individuals who loved him through his personal kindnesses is known only to the God who sent him to care for them.

Caring for others happened often in the ministry of President Monson. He would go to visit someone in need, feel while he was there an impression to go to another person, and then to another. More than a few times, such a person said, “I knew you would come.” He or she may have known, the Lord may have known, but President Monson didn’t know when he started out. However, those who knew he would come also knew that God loved them enough to send His servant. They felt the love of God through President Monson’s kindness to them. The love of God, and love for God’s children, permeated his life.

That love began early and endured with him to the end. In his personal service and as he led in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he treated these words of the prophet Isaiah as the word of God. Isaiah wrote of the law of the fast, which has as a focus care for those in need:

“Is [this law] not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide



not thyself from thine own flesh?

“Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward.

“Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. . . .

“And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, . . . and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not” (Isaiah 58:7–9, 11).

In the Lord’s service over a lifetime, President Monson cared for those in temporal and spiritual

need, and he received those promised blessings. When he called on the Lord in prayer, the Lord answered. And to Thomas Monson came the assurance that the Lord was there.

President Monson often quoted the promise that the Lord would be with us in our faithful service for Him. Those promises were true in his experience.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:88 was a favorite: “Whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up.”

Because he knew that promise was a reality,



President Monson was optimistic. It also made him courageous. When he had to make difficult and important choices, he expected the Lord would answer his prayer and show him the way to go. When he was called to go into what appeared to be dangerous or perilous situations, others were afraid, yet he felt no fear. He believed that the Lord went before him and that angels were placed around him to bear him up. That proved true. His daughter, Ann, who has spoken so movingly today, stood near him hours before he passed away. I was blessed to be there.

As I looked on his face, I thought that the Lord's promise was being fulfilled. He had been surrounded and borne up by human angels—and perhaps more.

I felt the assurance that the resurrected Lord, who has gone before him into the spirit world, waited with outstretched arms. I felt a burning testimony, which I now bear to you, that President Monson knew the Lord, that he had been cleansed through the Atonement as he gave his all in the service of the Lord and of the Father's children. He had come to know the Lord.

He loved the Lord. And he said he knew that the Lord loved him.

President Monson lived the life that King Benjamin commended to us:

“I say unto you, I would that ye should remember to retain the name written always in your hearts, that ye are not found on the left hand of God, but that ye hear and know the voice by which ye shall be called, and also, the name by which he shall call you.

“For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart? . . .

“Therefore, I would that ye should be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works, that Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent, may seal you his, that you may be brought to heaven, that ye may have everlasting salvation and eternal life” (Mosiah 5:12–13, 15).

I testify that Jesus is the Christ. I bear solemn witness that, through His sinless life and His infinite Atonement, all of the children of Heavenly Father who come into mortality will be resurrected. Through the ministration of angels to Joseph Smith, the prophet of the Restoration, the full priesthood keys were restored. Those keys were passed in an unbroken line to President Monson. They included the power to seal families together for all eternity. President Monson knew that and so testified. That priesthood power will continue in the Savior's Church on the earth until He comes again.

President and Sister Monson were sealed by that power. I pray a blessing on all their posterity that they may have the assurance that the Lord watches over them and that they may anticipate a glorious and eternal family reunion. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



# WE ARE BETTER BECAUSE OF HIM

BY PRESIDENT RUSSELL M. NELSON

President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

**D**ear family, brothers, sisters, and friends, I am honored to speak at the funeral of my leader, mentor, and dear friend, President Thomas S. Monson.

My feelings are tender for this man I have known and loved for more than 50 years. On behalf of all General Authorities and General Officers, we proclaim our love and gratitude for President Monson. To his family—Thomas, Ann, and Clark, along with their spouses, children, and grandchildren—we also express our deepest love and sympathy. We greatly appreciate the heartfelt messages spoken by Ann M. Dibb, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, and President Henry B. Eyring and beautifully sung by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

President Monson lived a remarkable life. There will never be another like him! There have been and will yet be many tears of separation shed by each of us. We will really miss him! But our sorrow is assuaged by the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. His bitter cup makes our bereavement bearable. His Atonement makes the Resurrection a reality. His Atonement makes it possible for families to be together forever in Heavenly Father's plan. We rejoice in knowing that President Monson is reunited with his dear Frances and that one day we may also resume our associations with them.

Since President Monson's passing, memories of his life have been so very well prepared and presented by the media. These have been

thrilling to me. In addition, dignitaries and friends throughout the world have sent their condolences and expressed profound admiration.

This is to be expected in behalf of a man who influenced the lives and shaped the destiny of millions of people around the world. We are all better because of him. And the Church is better because of him. He leaves a legacy of growth. Since his ordination as an Apostle in 1963, Church membership has risen from 2.1 million to nearly 16 million. The number of currently serving missionaries has grown from 5,700 to more than 70,000. And temples—then only 12 in number—now number 159, and more are coming.

But with all of this, President Monson constantly focused on the individual. He reminded





**Family members lay their yellow roses on President Monson's casket in a final farewell.**

us with expressions such as “Send a note to the friend you’ve been neglecting,” “Give your child a hug,” “Say ‘I love you’ more often,” “Always express your thanks,” and “Never let a problem to be solved become more important than a person to be loved.”

President Monson never sought the limelight. In a world saturated with “selfies,” he modeled selflessness. He personified the statement of the Lord, who said, “He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.”<sup>1</sup> He gave his own time to visit, bless, and love others. Even in his waning season, he continued to minister, making frequent visits to hospitals and senior centers.

Throughout the years, I shared many cherished experiences with President Monson. May I relate just one that shows how he used persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, and love unfeigned to achieve tremendous goals.<sup>2</sup>

In 1985, I was given responsibility for the Church in Europe, an assignment President Monson held for many years. I was his junior companion in much of that challenging work.

Behind the Iron Curtain, President Monson had worked for nearly two decades to establish trust with government leaders of the German Democratic Republic.

In 1988, he and I traveled with a small delegation of our local Church leaders to its capital city of East Berlin. In this country that had been closed to missionary work for more than 50 years, we felt impressed to ask permission for missionaries to serve there. We also asked for permission for worthy elders from that country to have opportunity to serve the Lord as missionaries elsewhere.

This critical meeting was held on the gray and dreary day of October 28, 1988. We met with Erich Honecker, chairman of the state council for the German Democratic Republic, and his staff. He started with a long speech about the merits of communism. (All we could do was listen.)

Then, under the flashing of countless cameras, President Monson was invited to speak. He boldly but kindly presented his message of how and why our missionaries would be good for that country.

After President Monson’s plea, all awaited Chairman Honecker’s response with breathless anxiety. I will never forget his reply: “President Monson, we know you! We have watched you for many years! We trust you! Your request regarding missionaries is approved!”

As we left that meeting, clouds parted for a moment and the sun shone brightly upon us. It seemed that heaven was signaling approval upon what had just transpired.

Now, as President Monson’s mortal life has come to a close, we feel that the Lord’s blessings to His prophet Nephi apply equally to our beloved, departed leader:

“Blessed art thou, [President Thomas S. Monson], for those things which thou hast done; for I have beheld how thou hast with unweariness declared the word, which I have given unto thee, unto this people. And thou hast not feared them, and hast not sought thine own life, but hast sought my will, and to keep my commandments.

“And now, because thou hast done this with such unweariness, behold, I will bless thee [and thy family] forever.”<sup>3</sup>

I solemnly proclaim that President Thomas S. Monson was a prophet of God. He taught as a prophet and testified as a prophet. He had the courage of a prophet and the kindness of a prophet. He received revelation as a prophet and responded as a prophet. He lived as a prophet and died as a prophet, sealing with his life his testimony that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that His Church has been restored to the earth, and that this sacred work is true. To the testimony he bore so many times from this pulpit, I humbly add mine, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Matthew 23:11.
2. See *Doctrine and Covenants* 121:41.
3. *Helaman* 10:4–5.



## SELECTED TEACHINGS

The following teachings are from President Monson's ministry as President of the Church and are arranged chronologically.



### Following Promptings:

"The sweetest experience I know in life is to feel a prompting and act upon it and later find out that it was the fulfillment of someone's prayer or someone's need. And I always want the Lord to know that if He needs an errand run, Tom Monson will run that errand for Him" (*On the Lord's Errand* [DVD, 2008]).

### Receiving Divine Help:

"Remember that this work is not yours and mine alone. It is the Lord's work, and when we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help" ("To Learn, to Do, to Be," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 62).

### Love for Others: "What

is most important almost always involves the people around us. Often we assume that they *must* know how much we love them. But we should never assume; we should let them know" ("Finding Joy in the Journey," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 86).

**Service:** "Unless we lose ourselves in service to others, there is little purpose to our own lives. Those who live only for themselves eventually shrivel up and figuratively lose their lives, while those who lose themselves in service to others grow and flourish—and in effect save their lives" ("What

Have I Done for Someone Today?" *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 85).

**Temple Blessings:** "Until you have entered the house of the Lord and have received all the blessings which await you there, you have not obtained everything the Church has to offer. The all-important and crowning blessings of membership in the Church are those blessings which we receive in the temples of God" ("The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 93).

### Atonement of Jesus

**Christ:** "I believe that none of us can conceive the full import of what Christ did for us in Gethsemane, but I am grateful every day of my life for His atoning sacrifice in our behalf.

"At the last moment, He could have turned back. But He did not. He passed beneath all things that He might save all things. In doing so, He gave us life beyond this mortal existence. He reclaimed us from the Fall of Adam.

"To the depths of my very soul, I am grateful to Him. He taught us how to live. He taught us how to die. He secured our salvation" ("At Parting," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 114).

**Prayer:** “Our Heavenly Father is aware of our needs and will help us as we call upon Him for assistance. I believe that no concern of ours is too small or insignificant. The Lord is in the details of our lives” (“Consider the Blessings,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 88).

**Trials:** “We know that there are times when we will experience heartbreaking sorrow, when we will grieve, and when we may be tested to our limits. However, such difficulties allow us to change for the better, to rebuild our lives in the way our Heavenly Father teaches us, and to become something different from what we were—better than we were, more understanding than we were, more empathetic than we were, with stronger testimonies than we had before” (“I Will Not Fail Thee, nor Forsake Thee,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 87).

**God’s Love:** “Your Heavenly Father loves you—each of you. That love never changes. It is not influenced by your appearance, by your possessions, or by the amount of money you have in your bank account. It is not changed by your talents and abilities. It is simply there. It is there for you when you are sad or happy,

discouraged or hopeful. God’s love is there for you whether or not you feel you deserve love. It is simply always there” (“We Never Walk Alone,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 123–24).

**Preparedness:** “We live in turbulent times. Often the future is unknown; therefore, it behooves us to prepare for uncertainties. When the time for decision arrives, the time for preparation is past” (“Are We Prepared?” *Ensign or Liahona*, Sept. 2014, 5).

**Example:** “As the world moves further and further away from the principles and guidelines given to us by a loving Heavenly Father, we will stand out from the crowd because we are different. . . . Those things which make us different from most of the world also provide us with that light and that spirit which will shine in an increasingly dark world” (“Be an Example and a Light,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 88).

**Choices:** “May we maintain the courage to defy the consensus. May we ever choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong.

“As we contemplate the decisions we make in our lives each day—whether to make this choice or that choice—if we choose Christ, we will have made the correct choice” (“Choices,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2016, 86).

**Charity:** “Let us examine our lives and determine to follow the Savior’s example by being kind, loving, and charitable. And as we do so, we will be in a better position to call down the powers of heaven for ourselves, for our families, and for our fellow travelers in this sometimes difficult journey back to our heavenly home” (“Kindness, Charity, and Love,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2017, 67).

**The Book of Mormon:** “I implore each of us to prayerfully study and ponder the Book of Mormon each day. As we do so, we will be in a position to hear the voice of the Spirit, to resist temptation, to overcome doubt and fear, and to receive heaven’s help in our lives” (“The Power of the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2017, 87).







*“Choose a companion carefully and prayerfully; and when you are married, be fiercely loyal one to another. Priceless advice comes from a small framed plaque I once saw in the home of an uncle and aunt. It read, ‘Choose your love; love your choice.’”*

President Thomas S. Monson  
April 2011 general conference





*“May our Heavenly Father  
bless us . . . that we may  
follow carefully the steps  
of our Lord and Savior,  
Jesus Christ. I testify that  
He is our Redeemer. He is  
the Son of God.”*

President Thomas S. Monson  
April 2015 general conference

THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

